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# MARK MARKSEN'S SECRET

JESSIE ARMSTRONG

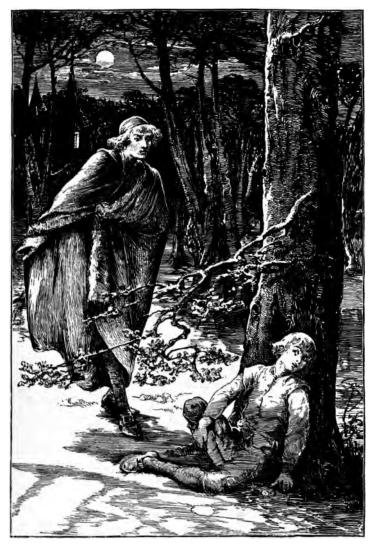
IT"GLASGOW BAR COMPANY Boys'Brigade. Presented to rivate Arthur Fred Lander 1. Ken Bren aleur Stewart arthur Rennick







BIEN



"My poor boy, how came you here?"

# MARK MARKSEN'S

## SECRET

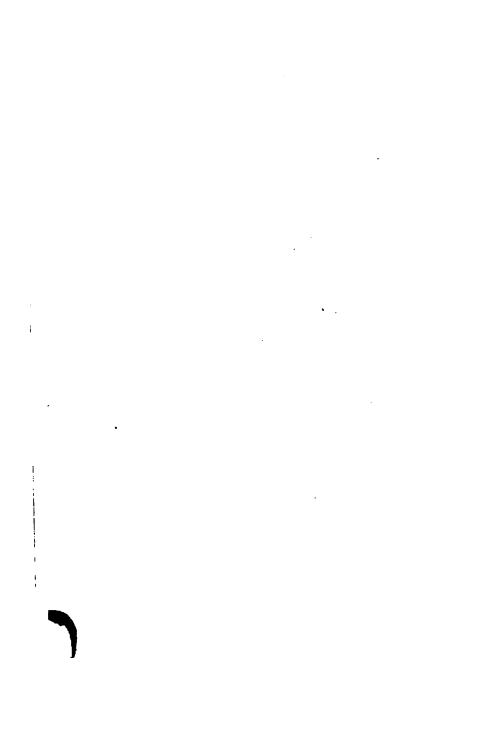








T. NELSON AND SONS
London, Edinburgh, and New York



# MARK MARKSEN'S SECRET

### A Story

BY

#### JESSIE ARMSTRONG

Author of "Dan's Little Girl," "A Shadow on the Threshold."



#### T. NELSON AND SONS

London, Edinburgh, and New York

## ALE 5278

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## MARK MARKSEN'S SECRET.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### FAMILY MISFORTUNES.

No one seemed to know who he was, or whence he came, or anything about him, except that he lived in the curious old house within the forest—a sort of castle on a small scale—which until a few months earlier had been shut up and untenanted, save for the rats, and for the bats and owls which got in and out through a broken and unshuttered window, and made the place a terror to all who approached it at night, by reason of the mysterious hootings and flappings that issued from it; sounds that really did cause an uncanny sort of feeling when heard by timid wayfarers on a still moonlight night, and which caused people to say that the house in the forest was haunted. And, perhaps partly because they said

so, very few people went near the house; days, and weeks, and even months would pass by and not a creature would approach it. For the most frequented path, which led to the town, and to the outlying scattered homesteads, was quite in another part of the great, wide-spreading forest; and so were the most favoured spots for pleasure-parties in the summer-time.

And thus it happened that Mark Marksen and his belongings not only arrived—very late one night—but had been many weeks in the place, and had got it into some sort of more habitable condition, before it was discovered that any one lived there except the ghastly owls and bats.

And when the fact became known, by degrees, to just a few persons, even then an air of mystery still hovered round the place, causing it to be almost as much shunned as formerly. For the few who, passing by the forest house, discovered it to be newly tenanted brought home strange tales of it and of those who dwelt there; for peasant eyes and minds taking note of unaccustomed sights and sounds, and failing to comprehend, attributed to them a mysterious origin born chiefly of their own superstitious fancies.

Glimpses had been caught after nightfall of a vast

chamber in which burned strange fires, whose leaping flames of red or blue threw weird, fantastic shadows on its walls; and over these fires a figure had been seen bending—feeding the flames, and watching them with deep and anxious scrutiny, as of one engaged in some unholy but absorbing task.

On rare occasions, too, when Mark Marksen had been met abroad in the forest, his appearance had been scarcely reassuring; for besides being clad in garments which though picturesque were decidedly "outlandish," he had a habit when walking thus of muttering to himself, gazing right before him, or up into the tops of the pine trees, with a listening air, as if harkening to their voices, as perhaps he was; though the stories they told him must have been chiefly sad ones, for he would often shake his head regretfully and return to his home with a face still more sorrowful than when he had left it. Sometimes as he entered he would see a small, half-recumbent figure, clad from head to foot in a little gown of creamy wool, and with no colour about it at all but its red-gold hair and its great hazel eyes and small pink mouth: the angel of the forest house, folks called her. Generally Mark would pass his daughter by unheeding, or even with a darker look and a quickly averted face if by chance his eyes encountered the earnest, pleading look of the child's clear eyes. he read their language wrongly. They were pleading for his notice and his love, whereas he fancied always that they expressed fear of himself, if not repulsion, and reproach for a misfortune she had experienced some time before; for his imagination, distorted by self-reproach, blinded him to the true expression on his child's face. When her father passed her by so coldly, Miriam would turn her little face away with a sigh, and with tear-filled eyes, in mute sorrow, till one or both of her two consolers and worshippers came to comfort her. Leo, the great English mastiff -guard and defender, if need were, of the forest house and its inmates-Leo would come and lie down by her low couch, resting his great, beautiful head close to her, and looking up at her with eyes full of loving trust, like an amiable lion couchant. Or old Anna would sit by her beloved charge, knitting, and talking to her of many things-sometimes of the sweet mother and of the brother and sister whom the good God had taken home to himself when fever was rife in the great city, where they used to dwell before they came to live in this lonely castle. And Miriam's eyes would light up

with joy as Anna reminded her of how the dear mother had loved her, and was waiting full of love and eagerness in the blessed heaven till the holy angels should lead in her little Miriam, and she herself should take her by the hand and lead her to the dear Christ.

When Anna said that, Miriam would glance at her inert limbs, and up again into Anna's face with mute, sorrowful questioning; but Anna was equal to the occasion.

"Yes; surely, Liebling, thou wilt walk then. Listen, my child! Directly the holy angels shall bear thee in their arms to heaven, it will be but to set thee at once on thy feet: do they not know how thou longest to run hither and thither like other children? So they will lift thee up and set thee down, and thou wilt run into the heavenly fields straight to thy mother, and she will lead thee to the Christ, as I have said."

Miriam's intent gaze was fixed on the old woman's dark and withered visage, and the speaking eyes asked another silent question—

"And then," continued the old Alsatian, "the blessed Jesus will take thee in His arms, and He will

<sup>&</sup>quot; And then-?"

kiss thee; then He will set thee again upon thy feet, and put His hands upon thy shoulders so—just at the back, and then—at once—two white wings will be thine; and He will smile at thee, and will say, 'Go now, my child, and play yonder with those little ones. There thou wilt find thy Lisa and thy Ernst. They are mine, and I have kept them for thee all this time; and thou too art mine, and now I give thee to them again, and them to thee.'"

Miriam never tired of hearing old Anna talk thus. But sometimes when Anna was too busy to talk, owing to many household tasks—for she was an industrious and thrifty housewife—then she would bring her little mistress's zither, and Miriam's thin white fingers would wander lovingly over its strings, drawing sweet and plaintive melodies therefrom; while Anna, going to and fro in her wooden shoes, would croon in her cracked old voice, which had once been sweet, well-remembered words of the hymn tunes or "Volkslieder" Miriam played so well and tenderly. The sound of the plaintive but incisive toned instrument would penetrate anon to that mysterious chamber on the other side of the dwelling where sat her father with his secret.

What was it, this secret?

A shadow—an illusion—in pursuit of which, constantly hoping to grasp it, constantly baffled, sometimes despairing, yet never relinquishing its pursuit, Mark Marksen had devoted his best energies, infinite patience, thought, and labour, almost unceasing, since the early years of his manhood. For what? stand now, with regard to the secret, in his premature age exactly where he had stood as an ardent and imaginative student, enthusiastic in the pursuit of knowledge and especially in the pursuit of nature's hidden secrets, which in his boyish ardour and audacity he dreamed that he might force her to reveal. Little less than a mania did this quest become as time Youth, health, time, money, all were went on. thrown into the crucible and there consumed, uselessly, but yet without regret. His legitimate business, inherited from father and grandfather, that of a pharmaceutical and analytical chemist, fell off through sheer neglect, till no possibility of a subsistence remained in it. The art for which in his youth he had shown rare ability was thrust aside; wife and children received less and less of his attention, till at length they might have been excused had they doubted his love. But Miriam, his gentle wife, never did doubt that. Once in his self-centred life, when

he was about thirty years old, his feverish energies had been suddenly withdrawn for a time from his secret quest, and were devoted to a new idol. all the passion of his then ardent nature, Mark Marksen loved and wooed the sweet, true-hearted girl who had enchained his fancy at first sight. There was a brief courtship, a speedy marriage, a short period of happiness, too intense, perhaps, to last; and then gradually the former idol of Mark's heart resumed its sway, drawing him closer and yet closer within its coils, till at length everything in life ceased to have interest or attraction for him, save that which related directly or indirectly to the work he had in hand, and which at that time he never doubted he would live to accomplish at length, in spite of countless failures. Meantime, while working and waiting for the boundless wealth which he firmly believed he would one day grasp, poverty stepped over Mark Marksen's threshold, and became month by month and year by year a closer guest. Business dwindled; friends fell off; his strong manhood became enfeebled; his wife's beauty faded, and his children's health declined. There came a wet, unhealthy season, and fever was rife for many weeks in the township. And one morning, almost before he had realized that the

insidious foe had crept into his home, Mark suddenly awoke to the terrible consciousness that his own three children were in its fell grasp, and their mother watching with a calm born of despair by their bedsides. That night one child died; the next a second. three days after that the third child had been removed to the hospital; and Mark Marksen, almost too dazed by its suddenness to realize the greatness of his loss, was following wife and son and elder daughter to the Throughout the night following, and far into grave. the next day, Mark sat in the chamber to which no one but himself ever penetrated, without rest, without food, holding bitter counsel with his own thoughts. Had he neglected his duties, the duties of a husband and father, to follow a fantasy of his own imagining, which only beckoned him onward to thrust him back again, baffled and well-nigh distraught with disappointment? Were all his arduous studies, his minute researches, his trials and his patience, to be utterly lost and in vain? No—a thousand times no! Success at length would surely crown his efforts. And then—ah, what then? They for whom he had ever told his heart and his conscience he was toiling were gone from him for ever: the night-wind was blowing already over the grave where three slept; the (452)

last was destined speedily to follow them. If they had but lived a few years longer, to enjoy the wealth which must, which must ere long reward his patient endeavours!

Once or twice, as he kept his solitary vigil, a thought crossed the mind of the miserable man that he would give it all up—that he would burn his books, destroy his notes, and shatter his crucibles. Once he started up as if about to do it; lit a lamp which cast but a dim light about the chamber, and going to a table at its far end looked among many scattered books and manuscripts for a certain notebook. As he leaned forward over the table to look for it with the lamp held aloft in one hand, the other fell upon the open pages of another book. He took it up, and by the dim lamp-light read words which had over and over again appeared to the misguided man as a species of prophecy to himself: "Tout vient à œux qui saient attendre."

He shut the book, and returned to his seat by the expiring wood fire. Yes, he would wait still—wait and work. True, they were gone who should have profited most by his labours. Yet it might be that his youngest born would be spared to him—spared to become the inheritrix of fabulous wealth. And if

not, then he would labour still; and, dying at length, would leave that wealth to endow much-needed charitable institutions. That would be a worthy object to toil for; surely Heaven would smile upon his labours now, and crown them with success. And then he would be content, nay willing, to die; but not to leave his secret behind him—that would he carry with him to the grave.

When the pale light of morning stole into the room, it rested upon the kneeling figure of Mark Marksen. In his mistaken enthusiasm he had been vowing that if the Almighty would so bless his work that the result he hoped for might at length be triumphantly achieved, he would henceforth devote his energies, his wealth, his life itself, to the work of benefiting his fellow-creatures, both as some atonement for any neglect he might have been guilty of towards those who, Heaven knew, had been dear to him, and also as a token of gratitude for the furtherance of his designs.

Rising from his knees, Mark then seated himself at the table, and endeavoured, with but partial success at first, to drive away sad thoughts and vain regrets by burying himself in abstruse studies, to which from that time he became more closely wedded than ever.

Six months later, almost simultaneously, two circumstances happened in his life. The death of an aged relative made him the inheritor of a small amount of money, and of the "castle" in the forest; and but a few days later he received an intimation from the hospital in which all this time his child had been cared for, to the effect that he must now remove her to his own home. All that science and care could do had been done by skilled doctors and tender nursing to restore the child to health; but in vain. Mark Marksen received his daughter back a poor little wreck of humanity at twelve years Paralysis supervening after the fever, had seized upon her lower limbs and upon her vocal chords, and bereft her, as was now feared for ever, of the power of motion or of speech. One thing, indeed, there was to be thankful for-so said the kindly doctor and nurse from whom Mark received his daughterthe sense of hearing was uninjured, was if anything keener than before; and Mark saw the child's eyes light up with joy as her speaking face echoed their words of thankfulness. Moreover, Miriam's health. apart from her affliction, seemed re-established. Frail she would always be, but there was no reason why she might not live to mature womanhood, and even beyond it, under favourable circumstances. A country life, with quiet yet cheerful surroundings, would be best; so said the doctor. And that opinion confirmed Mark in the plan he had already nearly resolved upon—that of establishing himself in the forest house of which he had lately become possessed, and where he might carry on his researches and experiments in even greater privacy than before.

#### CHAPTER II.

#### MIRIAM: EXTRACTS FROM HER NOTE-BOOK.

To suppose that Miriam was unhappy in her comparatively silent life, in which her own young voice was never heard, would be quite a mistake. She was neither unhappy nor lonely, though old Anna and the dog Leo were her sole—visible—companions, and though, quite unable to walk about, or even to move without assistance, she was placed at morning on her couch, there to remain till at evening she was tenderly undressed and tucked up in her bed by Anna's careful hands.

The child's mind, naturally bright, was rendered yet brighter and more imaginative by the peculiarities of her position; and being unable to communicate her thoughts and fancies by speech to those about her, she was thus, as it were, thrown back upon herself—upon the images and imaginings of her own mind—for interest and companionship. With a different

temperament this might have been dangerous; but Miriam's disposition was so sunny by nature that there was little fear of her ever becoming morbid, and though her thoughts dwelt greatly upon the past in a manner very unusual with the young, it was characteristic of Miriam that her fancy always showed her the past experiences of her twelve years of life in their brighter rather than in their darker aspects.

Reclining upon her couch, drawn close to the window always in warm weather, and when it was cold close to the stove, but opposite to the window so that she could still look forth into the forest, Miriam's thoughts would carry her back again to the years she could first remember when she and Ernst and Lisa had lived a happy and joyous life with mother in a big city and in a dull house. Yes, the house was dull, or would have been, only that mother always somehow contrived to make sunshine in it for her children. She was like the sun, and they were like stars, always hovering around her and getting brightness from her; so thought Miriam. mother always who played with them and taught them and cared for them in every way, assisted by nobody but old Anna. Mother always shared their simple pleasures and soothed their childish sorrows. She taught them to love God, who first loved them, and to try to follow goodness for its own sake. In the evenings, by the warm stove or in the summer twilight, she would gather them all around her and sing with them, or tell them stories, sometimes of elves and fairies and their wonderful doings, but oftener scarce less marvellous Bible stories, culled from the history of God's chosen people, whose blood flowed in her own veins, as in those of her husband, though both were Christians and had been born of Christian parents.

Miriam's father held but a small place in her recollections. More than anything else he took the form of a shadow flitting now and then about the house, clothed in some flowing garment and a little cap. Sometimes she—always in some respects a timid child—had been frightened by the cold and stern aspect of this shadow; and then Miriam recalled how her mother would take her upon her knee and talk to her gently and lovingly of "the poor little father" who had had so many disappointments, but who was always working hard, so hard, to get food and clothes for his dear children.

The time of the sudden fever coming, and of the

weeks which followed, seemed to Miriam like a troubled dream, from which she woke at length to find herself in a hospital bed with a face bending over her only less loving than that of her mother. She supposed that she was then too ill to wonder at anything or to ask any questions. And she thought that after that awakening she must again have gone to sleep for a long, long time. And after that—well, in thinking of those after days when her severe illness was over and convalescence was established, Miriam liked best to read over the notes she had made in the beautiful clasped book which Dr. Henschel had given her, and in which he and the nurses encouraged her to write.

"December 26, 188-.—Yesterday was Christmas. We had in the ward a big Christmas-tree with a beautiful waxen Christ-child on the top; and, ah, so many beautiful candles! This fine book was given to me by my dear Herr doctor. I am to write in it every day a little, that so I can tell my thoughts and wishes though I cannot speak them. Also I have a slate that my kind nurse Emma has given me just to write on for all that I daily want. How thankful I am that I can easily write! It was my dear mother that taught me so well. Oh, mother, mother!

"December 30.—To-day it is just one month since they told me that God had taken mother and Ernst and Lisa to heaven. They did not dare to tell me before, because for four months nearly I had been so ill. I think they thought I would die; and sometimes I cannot help thinking that I would have been glad.

"December 31.—I show always to my Herr doctor what I have written in my book. He tells me if my thoughts are right or wrong. He says what I last wrote yesterday is not right. I must be glad to live. Stay, I will say it in his own words. The Herr doctor said when he saw what I had written, 'Seest thou, my Miriam, that is not right? Thou must be glad to live. The good God very nearly called thee home. But then He decided to leave thee yet for a while on earth. So thou mayest well believe that He has some purpose all-wise and good in doing so.'

"'I!' I wrote. 'I am only a little girl, and I am not even like other children. I cannot walk or even talk as others can.' The tears came into my eyes; it was foolish, I know well, but I could not help it.

"The kind Herr doctor took my hands in his, and bent his head and kissed me on the cheek. 'My dear little maiden,' he said, 'I know well how hard it is for thee; believe that. But thou hast still these little hands with which to work in some way that thou wilt yet discover for thyself. And thou hast, moreover, thine ears and thy true clear eyes' (that is what he said); 'and by-and-by it may well be that others may find in thee a kind and sympathetic friend, who will listen to their joys and sorrows with unfeigned interest, and give comfort and consolation without the need of speech. Though there is hope, my child, as I have before told thee, that thou wilt regain thy speech one day.'

"January 1.—The Herr doctor has given me, ah, such a beautiful Neujahr. He has given me a storybook. But that is not the best. The best is a lovely thought which he gave me when he came, earlier than usual, to see me. He told me that my mother, my dear, dear Mütterchen, is with me still, although in heaven. I cannot see her indeed, nor hear her voice. But she is close to me—so close that I could touch her perhaps, only she cannot be touched by human hands. But in spirit we may be together. I may fancy that she is watching over me, taking an interest in me as she used; that she knows my troubles and pities me, but knows also that they will all pass away, that all will at last be right with me, if only I will trust in

God. Lisa and Ernst also are near me. Somehow I never felt that any of them had quite left me. It is as long since I saw my father as since I saw dear mother and Lisa and Ernst; but just as they were always nearer to me when they were alive, so they always seem now—yes, even before the Herr doctor gave me that new thought. Somehow we never seemed to know our father very well; he was always too busy, the dear mother used to tell us, to give us, his children, much attention; it was not that he did not love us.

"January 20.—The Herr doctor told me this morning that he can so plainly see how part of my work in the future may be to care for my father—to show him that I love him—now that my mother is not here to care for him. But how can I, a poor afflicted child, do that?

"January 22.—The Herr doctor says if I truly wish that—to be a comfort to my father—I shall surely find a way when the time comes.

"January 28.—My father came to see me. I did not think he was so old; and he looks very sad too. He said, 'I should have come to see thee before, Miriam; but thou wert too ill, and I have been extremely busy. But the good Dr. Henschel has let me

know of your progress.' Then he said nothing for a long time, but sat looking at me, or rather through me, as though he regarded something at the back of my head. And soon he rose, saying he must return home to his work. He took my hand, held it a moment, and was quickly turning away; but I looked at Nurse Emma, and pointed to my slate. She said, 'A moment, mein Herr!' And my father, turning again, stood while I wrote, 'Will you not kiss me, dear father?' Then he stooped and kissed my forehead, saying, 'Lebewohl, mein Kind!' I think he was sorry that he was forgetting to kiss me at first. Poor father! he is always so busy that it is no wonder if he forgets some things. I wonder will he ever love me? And now I will whisper something to my book—a secret—only for myself and my kind Herr doctor to read: I am—I am just a little bit afraid of my father.

"January 29.—The Herr doctor says that is not wrong, because I cannot help it. 'But that feeling will pass, my child,' he said, 'when thou knowest thy father better—when thou art living with him in thy home again.' In my home! I turned cold and shuddered. No mother, no Lisa, no Ernst! Oh how dull and gloomy that home would be!

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- "'When will that be, Herr doctor?' I wrote on my slate.
- "'In two months, perhaps,' he answered gravely, stroking my hand.
- "Then I turned my face over on the pillow and wept. I know—I know it was wrong. But I did not want to go home. I would rather remain here in the hospital. Here all are kind to me, all love me. Here there are bright faces, though so much suffering. Here there are flowers and light and warmth—and music often! and I love music; and there will be no mother, no Lisa, no Ernst to make music for me now! The Herr doctor was stroking my hair, and saying,—
- "'Nay, nay, weep not, my child. Canst tell me something of thy trouble?'
- "And after a little I wrote, 'In my home there will be no brightness. No mother, no sister and brother—no music.'
- "He made no answer at first, only kissed me, so kindly. But after a little he asked,—
  - "'Dost thou so greatly love music, my child?'
- "And when I answered, 'Yes, dearly,' he said nothing, but sat by me a little, quietly thinking, and looking, I thought, rather sad.
  - "February 1.—This has been a day of days! I

shall always remember it with joy and gratitude—ah yes! In the morning Nurse Emma dressed me completely for the first time since my illness, and I was carried into another room, where were only two other young girls, also convalescents. A beautiful room, with a fine English fire of wood, and with singing birds, and many plants and flowers; a room so large that when each girl occupies her own corner it is almost as good as each having her own little room,and we have also each one a fine ornamental screen. But the most lovely part of the day was in the afternoon, when my dear, dear Herr doctor came and brought—oh, how good he is !—he brought me the zither which had belonged to his dear daughter, and on which he himself had taught her to play. And now he would teach me, said the Herr doctor; and he gave me my first lesson that very afternoon."

Nearly two months later, nearly at the end of March, Miriam had made one more entry, the last during her long sojourn in the hospital, as follows:—

"March 28.—To-day my dear Herr doctor gave me my last lesson on the zither; and also he said farewell to me. For to-morrow when my father comes to take me away, Dr. Henschel will be away on a little journey. I did not know that he was going till our lesson was finished. But then he said to me,—

"'Thou hast played well, my child. Thy progress in the time has been truly wonderful. Thou wilt be well able to amuse thyself. And when thou dost sit playing in thy new home in the forest, thou wilt think sometimes of thy old doctor—hein?'

"I put my hand in his, and the tears came into my eyes. He had been so very kind and good to me. Then the Herr doctor said,—

- "'So! And now, my child, farewell.'
- "I looked up quickly at him. Was it indeed to be already good-bye? He understood my look, and replied to it.
- "· Ach, so! I have a journey to go, dear Mädchen, and only a moment now to say farewell.'
- "But I clung weeping round his neck as he bent over me. After a little he gently removed my arms, and putting me back on my cushions held in his my two hands.
- "'Herzliebchen,' he said, and I saw that there were tears in his kind eyes, 'I am as sorry to part from thee as thou art to leave us. But if the good God will it so we shall meet again one day. And so, now once more farewell; and may He bless thee with His

best blessings, little daughter! And so, good-bye!' And once more my dear Herr doctor kissed me, and looked into my face as tenderly as if indeed I were his own little daughter, as he had called me. Then turning quickly away he left the room, and I saw him no more—no more!

"April 30.—It is more than a month since I wrote in my book; more than a month since my father fetched me away from the hospital, where, although I had been ill so long, I had been happy because everybody had been so kind to me and seemed to love me. Yet why? I had, I know, given very, very much trouble, and often had been impatient and fretful. Yet everybody appeared sorry when I went away, and Nurse Emma and two or three of the girls cried when they said good-bye to me.

"My father was kind. He kissed me and called me a good child. And then he said,—

"'Thank this lady for her great goodness to thee, daughter.'

"And Nurse Emma, putting her arms close about me, looked up at him and said,—

"'Nay, I well know all she would say could she only speak with her tongue, and even now her little heart tells me all through her true eyes' (that is what

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she said). And then my father remembered, and shaking his head and looking at me very sadly, said,—

"'Ach, Himmel! my poor child! And it is I who am in part the cause, and yet—I forgot!'

"Then Nurse Emma put her hand on my father's arm (we were all three alone together then, waiting for the carriage to take us away). 'Nay,' she said, in her gentle voice, 'Heaven sends afflictions such as this.'

"'Ach, so!' said my father, bending his head down on his breast; 'yet also Heaven allows us to be often the instruments of our own afflictions—and, alas! of those of others—by our own neglect and blindness.'

"Then he suddenly raised his head, and upon his face there shone a look of wonderful brightness, and he seemed to be looking at something a long, long way off.

"'But I shall make amends,' he said, 'not only to my own child, but to countless hundreds of children—ay, to all mankind, perhaps, and for all time to come.'

"I wondered what my father could mean. And Nurse Emma did also, I think; for she looked curiously at him while saying,—

"'Ah! is it indeed so? And may one ask how?'

"But directly she spoke my father turned towards

her, shaking back his long hair. And all that strange look, so bright and yet so dreamy, had gone from his face as he answered, with a little harsh laugh and a shrug of the shoulders,—

"'Ah, how! Who knows? Perhaps I may discover some wonderful medicine which may bring speedy healing to all your sick folks, madam.'

"Just then the carriage came; and in a little while after that I found myself back in the old dull house to which I had almost dreaded returning. It was not so bad as I had expected, this homecoming.

"Our old Anna, who had always helped my dear mother in her care of us, was there to welcome me. And when she looked at me and touched me, it was with so great love and tenderness that it almost seemed as though my mother's own loving spirit was in her. And thus the beautiful thought which the good Dr. Henschel had given me seemed yet more true. I was able to realize more than ever that my dear mother's spirit indeed watched over me, though she was hidden from my eyes.

"Four days later we removed to our new home in the forest. And now we have been here nearly a month. I should be a wicked and ungrateful girl if I were not happy. For though I do not see much of my father—for he is generally too much occupied to notice me much-I know he thinks of me and works And indoors I have old Anna, and the for me. beautiful dog Leo, that my father bought to guard our lonely house, who tells me always with his true eyes how much he loves me. And also I have my zither, on which I can play well enough to give some pleasure to Anna and myself. Poor Leo does not like it; but he has now left off howling at its sound, as he did at first, and tries to bear it patiently, because he knows I love to play; and he loves me, and is pleased to be always near me when he is indoors. And outside I have the great, wonderful forest, just now in its new spring garb of tender green. And the birds sing all day with gratitude to God, and with gladness of heart, because, as Anna says, the nests they have been so busy building now hold their broods of little ones."

# CHAPTER III.

### A FACE AT THE WINDOW.

In the dusk of the spring evening, Miriam, lying on her little couch, looked with dreamy eyes across to the window, through whose diamond panes she could yet see the forest trees gently waving their branches to and fro in the May breezes. Here, so nearly in the heart of the great forest, and at evening time especially, the May breezes were generally cold; and though during the day the sun, penetrating the yet sparse foliage of the trees, had rendered the air deliciously warm and aromatic, the night promised to be cold, and the warmth of the stove within doors was very welcome to old Anna Schwab and to her young charge.

The child reclined listlessly upon her couch, her pale and somewhat weary face receiving what light there was in the room—the soft glow from the open stove door, and the clear light of the early evening

stealing in through the window opposite; for an open space, comparatively free from trees, round about the house, allowed the light thus to enter the dwelling.

Anna was knitting and talking softly from time to time, half to Miriam, half to herself, while giving also an occasional eye to a couple of stew-pans simmering upon the stove, one of which emitted an odour sc savoury that it caused Leo now and again to rise from his recumbent position and sniff appreciatively as he beat Anna's garments with his powerful tail regarding her the while with a persuasive eye. movements awoke a great, long-haired cat, who had been wrapped in deep slumber in front of the stove and who now arousing yawned frantically, and stretching his paws over his head, made abortive attempts to touch Leo's legs or tail, but failing, curled himself again into a round ball tighter than ever while Leo once more threw himself down, so close to Sultan that his nose nestled in the cat's soft coat: for between the two there existed a friendship, closes perhaps for the mutual respect in which they held each other.

"Yes," said Anna, apostrophizing the dog as he laid himself down with a sigh; "thou mayest sigh but thou'lt not get thy supper yet, thou greedy dog!'

She and Miriam exchanged smiles, and the child, putting down her little thin hand, stroked Leo's tawny flank, which she could reach from her low couch.

"Thou art weary, Liebchen," said Anna presently, regarding her young mistress with an anxious look. "This has been a lonely day for thee, for with all the washing about I have not had much time to sit with thee. I will finish this heel, which is nearly done, for by the candle-light I cannot so well do it. And then perhaps thou wouldst like best to go to bed? No? Well, then, when I have done this I will just leave thee while I go to fold down my clothes for the morrow's ironing; and by that time the supper will be ready, and we will have it together, before I take thee to thy bed. Hein? Will that please thee, my child?"

Miriam nodded, smiling; and after a little Anna rose and went into an adjoining room, a sort of backkitchen and wash-house.

When she had gone Miriam lay musing dreamily, her eyes still turned towards the window and the forest glade, where the daylight was now fast fading. She thought of her father, as she did very often, for somehow the child bore in her heart a great pity for this grave, solitary man. He must be so very sad

and lonely. For all the day, from early morning till evening, he was shut up in his own rooms, on the other side of the old house, with no one to speak to him or to speak to, with not even a dog for a companion. He even took his meals alone; and Miriam scarcely ever saw him, except when occasionally he would enter the house by a door which opened directly into a passage whence he could see into the room she occupied; and then, though her wistful eyes were fixed on him, and though she would gladly have had him come and speak to her, he scarcely ever did so.

Only now and then, in the morning or the evening, he would come and stand for a moment in the doorway, and would say, "Good-evening," or "Goodmorning, daughter," as the case might be. And then he would turn to Anna, saying, "Make her happy, Anna; do all you can, see that the child wants for nothing."

Anna had not been gone many minutes into the back-kitchen on this particular evening when this occurred. Mark Marksen came and stood just within the sitting-room and spoke to his child.

"Good-evening, my daughter.—Ah, Anna"—as the old woman entered on hearing his voice—"the

child is well, I hope, and happy? So! that is right."

Miriam held out her hand; but apparently her father did not perceive it, and Anna's eyes were dim, especially in the waning daylight. Miriam sighed. In the hospital every sign she had made had been noticed—yes, and quickly responded to.

Mark Marksen turned and left the house, to wander in the forest, as he so often did at evening, sometimes late at night.

Anna, loudly echoing Miriam's sigh, muttered to herself as she went back to her task in the adjoining room.

"Ah," she said, "you poor dreamer! Yes, your child is well; and if she is not happy, she is content—yes, in spite of all. And thanks be to God that she takes after her blessed mother and not after you, and takes all the pleasure that God holds out to her, little or much, with a thankful heart, as her mother did—though it's little enough she had, poor soul! especially of your bringing. But you—you must just go crawling along like a poor beetle, blind to all the gladness you might have, and looking only after things you will never find. Bah! do I not know? There is a secret—I know not what, nor

desire to know. Only, when you have looked for it for more than twenty years and not found it out, one might as well give it up, particularly when one has spent nearly all one's money over it, all for nothing. And I know what I heard my poor mistress say—ah yes, I know too well. She thought he was but for ever running after a phantom—wasting his life. For what? Just for nothing at all, no doubt."

Thus Anna talked and folded. And Miriam, following her father's figure till she could see it no longer, dwelt on the first words the old woman had uttered as she disappeared into the inner room.

Was her father dreaming indeed? Was this occupation in which all his time, all his thoughts were engaged, for which alone he seemed to live—was it nothing more than a dream? Was he always, always looking for something which he might never discover?

Miriam could well recollect the last year or so of her life before the fever came into their home. She could recall how often her mother had been sad about her father, and had seemed to pity him. Perhaps she knew it—probably she did—and had reason to fear that this object in which his whole soul was centred would never in all probability be realized.

Poor father! if after all these years of patient toil he should never be able to bring his invention, or whatever it might be, to perfection! And poor mother! how it must have grieved her to know that the dear father was wasting his life, trying for ever, as it were, to grasp a shadow which never could But perhaps, after all, his life was not be grasped! so wasted as might be supposed. What perseverance her father must have, and what patience! And she, his daughter, had to learn patience, too, in a different It was sometimes difficult. How often, how very often, she longed to be able to walk about, to do things for herself, to get things for herself-not to be so dependent on old Anna. And then to speak -ah, no one knew how she longed to do that! Anna was good and kind, but she could only with difficulty read writing. And then, besides, always to be obliged to write what one would say. No one knew how hard it was. Yes, One-God knew; and her mother too, perhaps, and pitied her. How her mother would nurse her and fondle her were she now with her, living upon earth! As Miriam thought thus, she could in fancy feel her mother's loving arms about her, and imagine she felt the soft touch of her lips upon her cheek.

She fell into a reverie of the old days when, just as she sat now in the twilight, she and her brother and sister had sat with the dear mother, listening to her stories or her singing. It almost seemed that she could actually see her mother's sweet face, and herself on her low stool leaning on her lap, and the bright face and sparkling eyes of Lisa in the rocking-chair opposite. And then Ernst, with his intent, speaking face, the thin cheeks, and great dark eyes-how clearly she could see it! So clearly did Miriam seem to see her brother's face that all at once a feeling came over her that it was real—that he was there; not sitting near the fire, as she saw him in fancy, but out there, close outside the window. She raised herself with a quick movement, and at the same moment Leo rose to his feet, and with a whine of uneasiness went towards the window, on which Miriam's intent gaze was fastened. For there—was she waking or dreaming?—there surely was a face pressed close against the window-pane looking into the room.

It was gone again directly, and Miriam was neither astonished nor frightened as she lay back again watching to see if the face would reappear. It did not. Leo, after sniffing below the window and at the door again, came back to the hearth and laid himself down quietly, his chin upon his paws.

And Miriam lay a little longer thinking of her dear ones. But when Anna entered, she greeted her with these words, written on her slate,—

"I have seen Ernst."

But Anna thought only that the child had slept and dreamed.

### CHAPTER IV.

## IN THE FOREST AT NIGHT.

Mark Marksen pursued his way through the silent forest by a path he knew well, leading, by a gradual ascent up its pine-clad heights, higher and yet higher, till he emerged at a spot he often frequented at night; a comparatively untimbered space, where, embosomed beneath a sweeping curve of craggy rocks, there lay a placid lake, not large, but apparently fathoms deep, and now shining with a silvery light in the rays of the lately-risen moon.

Here Mark stopped, leaning against a rugged fir tree, or sometimes walking with folded arms to and fro upon the shore of the lake, and gazing into its placid depths with gloomy, well-nigh despairing eyes.

This day had been one more to be added to many he could count in the past years which had been peculiarly fraught with bitterness and disappointment. Once more he had been, as he believed, on the very verge of discovery, only once more to be baffled and defeated.

Last night he had risen from his abstruse studies and researches triumphant in the conviction that he had at length mastered the solution of his riddle; that his patient toil and endless experiments were now at last to be rewarded; that the priceless secret which nature had been at so much pains to hide would be by him wrested from her ere another night should fall. But the test once more applied once more had failed, and in the first moment of certain defeat Mark Marksen had thrown himself prone upon the floor of his laboratory a crushed and humiliated man.

This time he had been so sure of success it had seemed almost actually within his grasp. And yet it had again escaped him—vanished into air like the soap-bubble blown by a child in idle sport.

And this after all his years of labour and arduous study! All, all to be thrown away! For the sting of this day's failure lay in this, that Mark now was forced to confess to himself that so far as he knew he had now exhausted every means of discovering the secret. Useless now was it to pore

further over the works which to him had been once almost priceless, and which he had indeed acquired at so great cost; vain to search again through their pages or through his own voluminous notes seeking a theory sufficiently practical to test; vain to try further experiments—to throw valuable material into his crucibles, and pore over them in eager hope only to be again and yet again deluded.

Miserable man that he was, to have wasted half his life in pursuit of an illusion! Half his life! nay, all of it. For with this extinction of his hopes, which he now believed to be final, Mark Marksen said to himself that his life was as good as ended—that he would thenceforth but endeavour to drag out a weary and purposeless existence.

These thoughts still filled his mind when he wandered forth into the forest by night. But yet, as he walked there alone, with nature in one of her calmest and loveliest moods, the turmoil of his spirit grew less, and though the hopelessness remained, the wild turnult of indignant despair at the failure of all his hopes was somewhat quelled at length by the soothing influences of the sweet night. A still, clear night, with the moon nearly full, riding high in a cloudless sky, throwing into bold relief against it the

rugged outlines of the crags rising higher and higher till one snow-crowned peak seemed almost to touch it. And at his feet the placid silver lake, scarce a ripple upon its surface, and looking so calm, so peaceful, so inviting to repose beneath its quiet waters.

Had it not been for his child!

But mistaken and deluded as he was, Mark Marksen had no coward's soul. He would not leave his child, his afflicted child, alone in the world—the child for whose existence he was responsible; ay, and not only for that—for her affliction also. For in that sad time, not yet one year ago, sorrow, one of God's messengers, had whispered the truth to his heart—a truth to which he had then, not altogether vainly, endeavoured to close his ears and to shut his eyes.

But now, as he stood here in the quiet night alone with nature and with nature's God, the truth was borne in upon his soul as it had never been before. He seemed all at once to hear it breathed in the pine trees as the breeze whispered through their topmost branches. He saw it written upon the surface of the lake, and above in the clear and star-spangled vault of heaven. It was impressed upon his heart as if written there by the finger of God.

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And there in the solitude, so solemn and so grand, Mark Marksen fell upon his knees and held his clasped hands outstretched in an agony of prayer to the eternal God, who had never seemed so near to him as in that hour of his awakening and remorse. But words came not readily: it was his spirit which prayed "with groaning that could not be uttered."

"O God, I have sinned! But depart not from me, or I am lost! I have not only been deluded; I I said to myself always that have deluded myself. all I did, all I left undone, was with one beneficent aim—to benefit mankind, to enrich posterity; above all, to be an inestimable boon and blessing to those of my own blood whom Thou hadst given me. I said so; I excused all on that score. I said always that it was not for myself but for others. I lied! I lied to Thee, to my own heart, to the wife who loved me better than I knew then or cared, and who lies now in her grave, hastened there by my blindness and neglect. O God, I have little faith; yet some I must have, since my very heart cries aloud to Thee for mercy and forgiveness. I cry to Thee as Thine apostle did, 'I am a sinful man;' yet for that very reason I cry to Thee, Depart not from me, O Lord, or I am lost indeed!"

Mark covered his face with his hands, and remained kneeling for some moments after his voice was silent. A strange peace like an instant answer to his prayer began to steal into his heart, and when he presently rose and paced slowly to and fro his mind became He knew all now—all the sin of his past life. He knew that he had been a slave to two passions—ambition and avarice. Too well he knew that; God grant it might not be too late. He was a thoroughly repentant man, and he was a wise Therefore he did not expect that with repentance, however sincere, temptation to sin was put aside for ever. He knew that he would have to fight against it, often and desperately it might be. For in his heart Mark Marksen knew well that certain as he was that morning that he had at length exhausted every possible means he could discover for the solution of the great secret, it would take very little to make him start afresh in his researches and experiments in the vain hope that something had been unnoted, left undone, which being done would at last turn failure into success.

Should he burn his books, destroy his crucibles?

No; he could not do that—not yet. And they might be useful for other purposes.

One thing troubled Mark especially as he walked homewards through the forest. He had been sincere in one thing. If he had succeeded in discovering the secret, he had quite intended, both as an atonement and as a memorial to his dead wife and children, to devote an immense sum of money to the founding of institutions for the relief of suffering women and children.

Now he could never do that. He would be always a poor man, without the means of doing good in any way to his fellow-creatures. Well, it was part of his punishment. Had that benevolent design been in reality the true inspiration of his work, God might have prospered it; but since pride and covetousness had been his chief incentives, success had been withheld from him. It was out of his power now and for ever to atone for his neglect of his own dead ones by bringing help and gladness into the lives of others. "God so wills it. I am not worthy," Mark muttered to himself as he walked on with bent head.

Suddenly he heard a slight sound—a strange sound to be heard out here in the forest at night. He stopped and listened; it must have been but the cry of an owl. But no; there it was again. And it came not from above, from the trees or the air, but

from below, from the ground. Yes, unmistakably it was the moaning cry of a human being in distress, and not far off. He called, and a faint voice answered. Then striking matches from a box he carried always in his pocket, Mark Marksen looked around him, and saw but three or four yards before him something moving slightly and uneasily—the form of a young lad, half lying, half sitting, against the trunk of a tree.

In another moment Mark was kneeling beside him.

# CHAPTER V.

#### PAUL.

" M Y poor boy! how came you here? But never mind that. You are hurt. Tell me first about that—where and how."

"It is my shoulder. But that is not important—only twisted, I think; but it made me groan. I fell from the tree; and the worst thing is that I have made my leg bleed again: it is an old bad cut I had."

"So! Tell me but just where. One cannot see well. But put your hand on the spot exactly."

Mark was folding a large handkerchief he had taken from his pocket. The boy put his hand upon the inner side of his right leg, about the middle of the calf. Mark quickly and deftly bound the hand-kerchief tightly a little below the knee. Then feeling in the boy's jacket pocket, he found a smaller handkerchief, which folding up tight he inserted under the other as extra pressure, and twisting the ends of the

large one, knotted it securely. In former days Mark Marksen had been something of a surgeon as well as a practical chemist.

"There," he said; "that is the best I can do for the present. Where do you live? There is no house near here, or at all in the forest, but my own."

"I live in the city, a long way from here."

"I must take you then to my own home, which is not far off."

Mark put his arms under the boy to raise him.

"I can walk; do not carry me," he said faintly.

"No, indeed; you will not walk if I have but strength to bear you in my arms," Mark answered, raising him. And just then he heard a long, deep-drawn sigh, and the lad's head fell back. Mark knew that he had swooned. He rose with his burden, now heavier than it would have been, and went on his way.

"Walk indeed!" he muttered; "I believe you will not be able to put that leg to the ground with safety for many days."

Soon reaching home, Mark went round to his own private entrance leading to the suite of rooms he alone occupied. He knew that Anna would now be in bed, for it was nearly ten o'clock. The dog, Leo, turned

out as usual on guard in the yard, gave one deep bay as Mark entered carrying the strange lad. His master spoke to him, and the dog returned to his kennel.

Passing into the house, Mark opened the door of a room at the end of a passage, and carefully laid his burden on a wide, old-fashioned sofa. Then he passed into another room leading from the first, which was his bedroom, leaving the door of communication open behind him. There was a lamp burning dimly in this inner room, and by its light one could perceive that it was furnished and littered with much of the paraphernalia of an artist's studio. There were pictures, and models, chiefly in clay, both of still life and of animals, and of studies from the human subject. There was much wood about adapted for carving—some subjects commenced, nothing apparently finished; a turning-lathe, and tools for carving and engraving, all more or less in disorder, and covered with dust. Going through this room, Mark opened a door at its farther end, passed through and closed it behind him: never for a moment was that door left open. Very soon he returned to his bedroom, carrying a lamp, a vial with some restorative, and a case of surgical appliances. Then he moved a table close to the back of the sofa, placed the lamp

upon it, lighted also two candles, and kneeling down by the still unconscious boy, proceeded carefully to examine the injured leg. The first thing was to remove the thick knitted stocking by cutting it up from ankle to knee. He had just done that, and remarked with satisfaction that his primary dressing of the wound had been successful in so far that it had stopped the bleeding, when the lad drew a deep breath and opened his eyes. Mark lightly covered the wound, and pouring something into a glass, made his patient drink it, and waited, watching its effect. In a few seconds the vague, dreamy look passed from the face, the eyes brightened, the colour returned to the lips, only the cheeks remaining deadly pale. In a moment more he answered the grave critical look fixed upon him by a faint smile.

"I am going to dress your wound, and may hurt you a little," said Mark. "Shall I send you to sleep again, or will you try to bear it bravely?"

"I will bear it bravely; only wait, please, one moment."

He covered his eyes with his right hand. Mark turned away.

In less than a moment, "Now I am ready," said the boy. And going to his side again, Mark noticed with interest the resolute, set expression of the young face.

Kneeling down he performed with care and precision all that was necessary—cleansing and dressing and binding up the wound with much skill and tenderness. And when it was finished he administered a few drops more of the restorative.

"There," he said; "now you will be more comfortable. But at your home in the city I fear there must be uneasiness. Your parents will be wondering where you are."

"I have no parents. Greta and I are alone in the world. Greta is my sister. She goes out nursing; and she is away now, so she will not be anxious."

"That is well, for we can get no message to her till to-morrow. And here you will have to remain for days."

"For days!"

"Yes: you must not again put your foot to the ground till that wound is entirely healed. Should it bleed again it might be serious. It pains you much now?"

The boy had winced, contracting his straight dark brows as if in sudden pain.

"No, not that, but my shoulder."

"Ah, I was forgetting that. Come now, and let us see." And Mark took off the lad's jacket, and sacrificing the shirt sleeve as he had the stocking, disclosed a shoulder bruised and swollen indeed, but no dislocation, as he had feared there might be.

"So!" he remarked; "we will soon make this more comfortable." And with that he proceeded to bathe and bandage it, and finally settled his patient as comfortably as circumstances would admit, with more pillows and a soft, warm coverlet. "So you must remain, for to-night at any rate," he said. "And now I go to get some refreshment for you."

In a very little while Mark returned with soup and bread, which the young stranger took gratefully and almost eagerly. His host and doctor noticed with satisfaction that his patient seemed not in the least excited or feverish.

"A placid disposition," he thought to himself; "that is all in his favour.—And now," he said, seating himself by the sofa, "you shall tell me your name and how you met with your accident; how you came to be in the forest at that time in the evening alone."

"My name is Paul Schlitter. I had been climbing the tree at the root of which you found me, and I fell from it." "Climbing trees at night-time!"

"Yes. I believed there was an owl's nest there, and I wanted to take one of the young ones while the old birds were flying abroad."

"So! But you must indeed be very fond of birds to go bird-nesting in the forest at night; and also you must be very bold."

"I could never be afraid of anything in the forest. Why should I be? The forest is God's own house," said Paul simply. "And Carl Stümpfen greatly desired to have a young owl. One he has already, but he thinks it pines for a companion, so I tried to get one for him."

"You could not have been lying there long when I found you," said Mark, "or it would have fared very badly with you."

"That is so. No, I had not been there long. And when I found I was hurt, and that I might not be able to walk, I prayed God to send me help; and He sent you." He smiled gratefully, and added, "So it was—that was ordered, as my father used to say."

Mark looked at the boy and wondered. He wondered whether it had been arranged, perhaps, also for him too—a quick answer to his thought that there was no probability of his ever being able to do any

good in his generation now that his great philanthropic schemes for the future were never likely to be realized.

Whether that were so or no, in Mark Marksen's heart there had been a stirring of the divine part of his humanity, of tenderness and pity, as he performed the kindly offices for the injured boy. For the first time in his life he had done a direct and personal kindness to a fellow-creature; and his heart warmed to the lad, and felt the more satisfaction in the act, perhaps because at the time it was called forth his own spirit had been so sorely crushed and wounded.

"And now thou must sleep," he said, employing the "du" as he would to his own children.

Somehow, as he looked at the lad, he was reminded of his son Ernst. It was but the thin face and the large, dark eyes that were like him, but yet the image of the dead boy was recalled very vividly to the father's mind as he stood looking down at Paul.

"Yes," said Paul, "I think now I shall sleep. Thank you, mein Herr, for all you have done." His eyelids drooped. But then he opened them again. "This must be the house I have seen before," he said. "I have often seen it. And—forgive me, but I have looked sometimes in through a window. I did to-

night, and I saw her again, the little house-angel with golden hair lying by the stove. Now I will sleep, and to-morrow you will send to my sister."

"I will."

"And to Carl Stümpfen?"

"Yes, if you wish it."

Paul's eyes closed again, and Mark thought he slept. But once more he looked up at him, saying dreamily,—

"Is she yours?"

" Mine?"

"The little house-angel."

"Yes," answered Miriam's father sadly, "she is mine, and to-morrow thou shalt see her if thou wilt."

And Paul smiled, and was soon sleeping peacefully.

After a time Mark Marksen laid himself down to rest also on his own bed in the same room. But he had little sleep, for besides feeling it needful to be on the alert to attend to his young patient, his thoughts now returned to the old groove, the one theme which had occupied his mind almost exclusively for so long, directly or indirectly. He tried to put these thoughts from him, and after a time almost succeeded. But he said to himself that it was hard, very hard, after all his dreams of wealth, all his

striving after it, to resign himself to poverty. For that is what it had come to. For by this time he had so little money left in the world, that it would be barely enough to keep himself and his child and Anna in the most meagre way. That was why he had of late been even more than usually anxious for the speedy success of his experiments—for the solution of the great secret. He had at length come almost to the end of his resources.

Well, he must turn his attention now to the combination of certain drugs by which it had now and again occurred to him that he might manufacture a new and valuable medicine. But even as he thought of this he sighed, smiling bitterly to himself.

"Yes," he said, "and having no money to advertise it, or even to patent it, I shall have to sell it for what price I can get to some one who will attain great wealth from it, reaping the harvest of my brains. Well, better men than I have known what it is to do that."

### CHAPTER VI.

#### MAKING FRIENDS.

In the morning Mark summoned Anna and showed her his still sleeping charge, telling her how he had found him, and what was the nature of his injuries; and further explaining that the boy would have to remain with them, and must on no account try to walk at present.

Anna looked in wonder at her master. He spoke very quietly, as was usual with him, but there was an animation in his manner and a bright look in his eyes which made him appear a different man from the gloomy and reserved professor she had hitherto known.

"He has come out of himself into the world," she said to herself. "Well, poor man, I am glad that something will arouse and interest him."

She was sorry for him, and believed that he had even taken too much to heart the sad occurrences of the last year; blaming himself unduly, perhaps, for what he considered his neglect. But all the same there were times when his mode of life, and especially his lack of interest in his child, angered the old servant, and made her apt to think and speak impatiently of her master. But now she listened to him with respectful attention, glancing the while with pity at the sleeping boy. Yet she could not help feeling a little jealous for her own Miss Miriam, because her master seemed so interested in this young stranger.

"I shall be from home a good part of the day," said Mark, "and it will not do for the boy to be too much alone. It will be dull for him—"

"Oh yes; that is so," interrupted Anna. "Miss Miriam is often dull too, when I am forced to leave her alone while at work."

She tossed her head slightly with a heightened colour, but relented when the professor, turning quickly to her, said sadly,—

"Ach, so! Yes, the poor child must be often dull, as you say. But now, Anna, the dwelling-room is very large; would it not be possible to place this couch there, so you could give attention to both children, and they will perhaps amuse each other?"

"That may be so, Herr Professor."

"The boy will not need much care," said Mark.

"After his long sleep I expect him to be tolerably well, for his health seems good enough. Only he must on no account put his foot to the ground."

"If you say so I will see that he does not, Herr Professor."

"Thank you, Anna. And now please bring breakfast to us here. And afterwards I will dress Paul, and we will get him and the sofa into my daughter's room before I go out."

An hour or so later the sofa was wheeled through the wide corridors and into the big dwelling-room, where it was placed not far from that of Miriam, who, already prepared by Anna for the advent of her visitor, awaited his coming with eager anticipation.

Then Mark went back to his room to fetch Paul, whom he had already informed of the condition of his child.

As soon as her father reappeared within the room, Miriam returned Paul's eager gaze with a glad look of welcome. She held out her hand. Her father did not see it, but Paul did.

"Your daughter wishes to touch my hand," he said.
"Please let her."

Mark carried him close to her, and the children shook hands. Then he placed Paul upon the sofa, and Anna, who was standing by, moved it into a more favourable position, that they might see each other better.

"It is very kind of you to let me come here beside you," said the boy.

Miriam smiled at him. Then she took up the slate on which she had written last night and showed it to Anna, glancing then at her father, and from him to Paul. Anna understood. They were to be made acquainted with the idea she had had the night before. But before she could speak, Paul anticipated her.

"You look just the same now with the sunlight on you," he said, addressing Miriam, "as you did in the firelight last night."

Miriam gave a look of intelligence, and touched the slate again.

"Yes, yes," said Anna: "last night the dear child thought she saw her brother. It was doubtless this young gentleman who was near the window for a moment."

Paul was very poorly dressed, but there was that in his appearance and manner, little as she had seen of him, that caused Anna to speak of him without hesitation as "a young gentleman."

Mark turned to his daughter.

"Yes," he said, "there is a likeness to Ernst. I noticed it too. Well, Miriam, you will not be sorry, then, to have him with you for a few days?"

Miriam's glad smile was answer enough to that.

Her father sat down, and turning to Paul inquired as to the whereabouts of his sister and of Carl Stümpfen. And in answer to one or two questions, the boy very willingly gave more information to his host about himself and his antecedents, Miriam listening with much interest.

"You will find Carl Stümpfen in K——Street," he said, "in the far end of the city—the old part near the university. He has a little shop where he sells pictures and articles of carved wood, and old medals, and other curios. And when you look into the shop you will see at the end a great cage with many birds. They are not for sale. Carl keeps them for himself. He loves them, and makes them as happy as he can, and calls them his children. And you will please tell him that I did not find the owl's nest—I think I must have mistaken the tree—but another time I will get him one, if possible."

"Not just yet," said Mark. "It will be long before you can climb another tree with safety. But you have not yet told me, my boy, how you came to injure your leg so badly the first time."

"I was splitting a piece of wood for my carving. It was a very hard piece, and I must have held it awkwardly, I suppose; at any rate, the knife slipped from the wood to my leg. It was a very deep cut; but it quickly began to heal, and soon I felt no more pain, and it had kept me in the house nearly two weeks. And I got so that I felt I must go out again; and Greta was not there to say, 'Be patient, Paul—wait yet a little longer;' and so I went, two days ago, for a walk about the town, and yesterday evening into the forest."

"So. And you understand wood-carving then?"

"Ah, only a little. I can make toys for children: dogs, horses, birds, just cut out in the white wood, that is all. And Carl tries to sell them for me. It is only a little money I can gain so, but Greta says it is a help. And by-and-by I hope to do more; for when my father died I promised him that I would always do all I could for my sister. And," added Paul with a sigh, "I wish I were a man now, that I might work hard and take care of Greta,

who has always taken care of me since our mother died."

" Is it long since she died?"

"When I was three years old, now I am fourteen. But my father died only a year ago. He was a doctor, and Greta is a nurse. Generally she goes out nursing at poor people's houses, though she was trained in a hospital. She likes us to keep on our home together, the little home in Carl Stümpfen's house where we lived with our father for some years before he died. That is why Greta will not go to live always in the hospital. But sometimes if there are extra nurses wanted she will go for a time. Now I know not where she may be, only that she was at the hospital last week. But if you will first go to Carl he may be able to tell you."

"I will go, and at once," said Mark, rising. "It is far to go, and your friend, doubtless, will be anxious about your absence. Are you comfortable, Paul?"

"Very comfortable, sir, and happy too, thank you," answered the boy, with a grateful look.

"Take care of him, Anna," said her master. "He should be amused, lest he grow restless, but he should not be excited."

"There is nothing to excite him here, master,"



replied old Anna, rather abruptly; "but yes, I will take care of him—and of Miss Miriam too," she added.

Mark turned to his daughter, looking at her with more kindly interest than he ever had shown before; for by this time he was so accustomed to the silent, recumbent little figure that he seldom noticed it.

Miriam's quick eye noticed at once the new look on her father's face. Taking her tablets she wrote quickly, "Thank you, Papachen, for giving me a companion. Now I shall not be lonely any more while Paul is here." She held it towards him with a smile. Mark read it, and made no answer in words, but he stooped and kissed her quickly on either cheek, then left the room without another word.

But Miriam's eyes had filled with happy tears.

"My father already begins to love me," she thought; how happy that will make me!"

Then she looked across to Paul, and desiring to make her first communication to him, wrote,—

"I cannot talk to you, but I shall love to listen whenever you like to talk. And I can answer if you can read my writing. And I am so very glad you are here. I know we shall be friends."

Tearing off the slip of paper, she tried to hand it to

Paul, who also stretched his hand to take it. But it was just out of his reach; and Anna was now outside the house.

Paul laughed, and made a movement to leave his sofa; his left foot was nearly touching the ground. Miriam vehemently shook her head, smiling and frowning at him. And as she did so she pointed to Leo, who, as usual, was reclining beside her. Then she wrote again on the paper,—

"You must be good and patient. I tell you so for your sister. And Leo will give you this note. He loves you, I think, because he has not growled at you or barked, not even when you were outside the window last night, though he knew it."

She folded the note, put it between the dog's teeth, and pointed to Paul. Leo understood, and gladly acted as special messenger. But as soon as Anna came in again she pushed Paul's couch nearer to Miriam's.

Anna was as good as her word, or better. She tried her best in many ways to make Paul comfortable and "at home." She was a little jealous of him, because her master seemed to think so much of him. He had never been so careful for his own children—never! But still she would do her best for the boy

-oh yes! And so she did. She looked out and brought to him one or two story-books that had belonged to Ernst. She put the cat up beside him, seeing that Paul was trying to entice it. And although it was her ironing-day, and therefore a busy one, Anna contrived to add some little delicacy to the plain dinner of broth and boiled meat to tempt the appetites of both children. And for the evening meal she made some little cakes, and baked them in the hot stove. But for a long time she spoke very little to Paul, and showered even more endearments and caressing words than usual on the little girl. Yet, in spite of herself, before afternoon was over Anna had completely softened to the winning influence of the boy's manner, so gentle and quiet, and grateful for all that was done for him; while he was at the same time so bright and cheerful in talking to Miriam. It did Anna's heart good to see the bright look on her little mistress's face, to notice her frequent smiles, and the absence of that weary and listless air the child usually wore as the day verged towards evening.

Paul talked to Miriam of the wonders of that forest which was so new and unknown to her, though now her home was in the midst of it. Paul was well acquainted with its lovely haunts, and on terms of at any rate comparative friendship with many of its denizens, to the extent at least of some knowledge of the habits and customs of many birds and insects; while he knew also just where to look for the prettiest flowers and fungi.

"As soon as I can walk again," said Paul, "we will go into the forest, and I will show you my favourite spots, and the trees where the linnets and the finches build—" He stopped suddenly; the smile fled from his face; his great dark eyes filled with tears; he drew a deep sigh. "Oh," he cried, "how could I forget! Oh, to think that you will never be able to walk out in the forest!"

The tears had sprung also to Miriam's eyes. But she smiled too as she stretched forth her hand and laid it on Paul's. Then she wrote,—

"Never mind. God wills it. I am content." She held it to Paul, who read it and nodded. Then she added, "It is such a comfort that you can so quickly read my writing. It is almost as good as talking."

"No, no!" Paul said, with a half-sob. "O Miriam, is it true that you will really never walk or talk again?"

"Almost certain," she wrote. "They told me so.

Only one doctor—my good Dr. Henschel—said I might one day recover my voice. And I—I believe that I shall."

Paul raised himself a little, and looked at her earnestly and gravely, almost solemnly.

"You do believe it—in your heart—really?" he asked.

Miriam, wondering a little at his manner, nodded twice emphatically. And then she wrote,—

"And I pray always to God that He will let it be so if it be His will."

Paul gazed at her still more earnestly, with a strange look of excitement in his eyes. At last he said, slowly and solemnly,—

"Then you will get it. My father would say so. If you pray for it, and believe that you will get it, you will. O Miriam, I too will pray—yes, always; and I know—I am sure—that God will give you back your voice again."

### CHAPTER VII.

## MARK'S ERRAND TO THE CITY.

A FTER a long walk through the forest and the environs of the city, and so on through many streets where dwelt the richer classes of its population, Mark Marksen came at length to its poorer and most populous quarter, where were situated not only the university and the hospital, but more than one factory for toys, clocks, and various kinds of bric-à-brac—such as many articles in bamboo, china, and papier màché, turned out in thousands by machinery, and eagerly bought by many in London and elsewhere in the firm belief that they were in reality of Oriental workmanship.

Mark Marksen had relapsed into his customary dreamy state, caused perhaps by the sight of a book-stall where he had on his first visit to this city picked up some rare volume which he fondly but vainly believed might prove of inestimable value to

him with regard to his secret. For a moment he had been greatly tempted to stop at that book-stall. Having found one such work, it might well be that the dealer had among his hoards another which might prove of more service to him. True, he had now but little money to spend in that way; but Mark knew well how to drive a bargain when occasion required. Still he tore himself away from the second-hand book-stall with a sigh, though with wonderful resolution considering the circumstances, saying to himself.—

"No: I will go first to Paul's people, that they may know he is safe; and afterwards, on my return, I will consider about it."

In the next street he found the little shop Paul had described to him; over it was this inscription—

" Carl Stümpfen,

"Curio Dealer and Picture Frame Maker."

He entered the shop, and saw at a glance, through an open door leading into an inner room, a large cage at its far end, and in front of it a little elderly man, wearing a skull-cap and green spectacles, whom he rightly imagined to be Carl Stümpfen, and who was engaged in whistling a bar of "Die Wacht am Rhein" to a bullfinch whose education had only lately commenced.

As Mark entered, the old man came towards him, removing his spectacles, and regarding him benevolently.

Mark began to explain his errand.

"It is to Herr Carl Stümpfen I speak?" he asked, raising his hat.

"But yes, mein Herr. And what can I do for you?"

"You are acquainted with Paul Schlitter?"

"Ay, ay," said the old man; "is he not like my own son? I do not know you, mein Herr; but you are perhaps the doctor, and are come from Peter Schmidt's to tell me that Paul is staying there with the sick child. He was anxious about him, that I knew, and also that he set out to go to him; but I did not think he would stay—he himself had scarcely recovered his strength. But there! I suppose that finding the child sleepless, Paul remained with him to soothe him, as he can in so wonderful a manner—"

"No, no," said Mark, interrupting; "it is not that. Paul was in the forest last night, climbing a tree in search of an owl's nest—" "Now, now, was there ever such a boy—so reckless, so daring!" cried Carl, raising shoulders and hands and eyes skywards. "Ah, mein Herr, and he has hurt himself, and you have come to inform me of it."

"Yes," said Mark, "but not seriously, though it might have been had I not so quickly come across him." And he proceeded to relate particulars, Carl listening with much concern, and with many ejaculations of pity and wonder, and of thanks to Mark for his care of the boy.

"And now," said Mark, when he had ended his story, "if you can kindly tell me where I may find Paul's sister, I will go and inform her of his whereabouts."

Carl once more threw his hands and his eyes aloft.

"Ach! It was but last week she was sent for to the hospital. In the toy-factory there had been an accident. Several children were injured—children making toys for other children to play with! Can one understand that—hein?" he demanded, raising his shoulders well above his ears; then slowly lowering them, and sadly shaking his head, he answered his own question. "No; that also belongs

to the mystery of pain which here we may never comprehend, but which in the hereafter may be revealed to us. And in the meantime, mein Herr, if you desire to find the Fräulein Margaretha, your best plan is to go over to the hospital yonder, where you may doubtless be able to speak with her."

"Paul tells me," said Mark, "that his father was a doctor. I fear he was not a successful man, since he has left his children but indifferently off."

"Ach yes! they have but a mere pittance. Successful? ah no; not as the world counts success. But there are many of the poor in this town who blessed him living, and keep his memory golden. Look you! Dr. Schlitter's wife was an Englishwoman, of great faith and piety. Schlitter himself was a Lutheran, and he held certain opinions which may have been an additional bond of sympathy between him and the woman he loved, and whom he married in England, where their children were born, and where they lived until some years ago."

"You and he were old friends?"

"Yes, yes; boys together! And when my poor Paul, formerly so brilliant, always so clever, returned at length to his own country, he came straight to me. But, alas! a so different man: aged before his time,

broken in health, disappointed yet not desponding; for to the very last he kept his faith in God, which he had carried always into practice."

"His faith, however, failed to save himself," said Mark Marksen.

"Nay," said the other gently, "do not mistake me. It was not in the efficacy, for healing purposes, of faith alone that Schlitter believed. What he did contend for was that faith was an invaluable ally; that in any case proper remedies, skilfully applied, are infinitely more likely to bring about the desired result if the divine blessing be trustingly invoked upon the means employed."

"Upon the part of the physician?"

"Upon his part, or the patient's, or even of those about him."

"And did he himself practise his doctrine?" asked Mark, a little incredulously, as Carl thought.

"Ay, that he did always. He told me, and I believed him, that he never had a case that he did not make a subject of special prayer to God on his own part, and wherever practicable on the part of the patient."

"There is no doubt, of course," said Mark, after a short silence, "of one thing—that faith in the doctor

on the part of the patient goes a long way. But," he added, shaking his head with a slight smile, "holding such belief and carrying it out, it does not surprise me to hear that Herr Schlitter was not a successful practitioner."

"Ach no!" said Carl; "not successful in a pecuniary For among the class who might have benefited him he was generally looked upon as a fanatic, and avoided accordingly. But among the poor! ach, how many were the marvellous cures he made, either by his skilful treatment, or his prayers, or both what know I?" Carl shrugged his shoulders. another thing," he added: "there were sometimes cases which by other doctors had been considered hopeless, humanly speaking, but which Schlitter cured after all. But these cases, he always declared, were effected by divine agency in answer to trustful prayer; sometimes by that alone, sometimes working through means not tried before and now thought of by a divine inspiration. But now, mein Herr, the day is advancing, and I fear I have detained you too long. Pardon me! but when I begin to talk of my Schlitter I am apt to become garrulous always."

"It has interested me much what you have told me of him," replied Mark, rising; "but I had better go on my way now. Some day before long I may perhaps see you again. You will like to know how Paul progresses."

- "You intend, then, to keep him for the present?"
- "Certainly; till his leg is thoroughly healed—ten days or a fortnight, perhaps."
- "You are too good, mein Herr; but you will get your reward."
- "I require none," Mark answered shortly. And then as he was leaving he turned and said, a little awkwardly, "I have an invalid child; the boy will be a companion to her—she is lonely sometimes. That will be sufficient reward." And before the old man could answer he was gone.

Not long afterwards Mark Marksen was sitting in an anteroom at the hospital, waiting till Fräulein Schlitter should have leisure to speak to him.

People were coming and going in the anteroom. Several poor women were there, some with children who were either under medical or surgical treatment or in need of being so. A few were looking with anxious expectation towards a door which led into the inner part of the building. By-and-by this door opening admitted several children in charge of an attendant, and a nurse who talked for a few moments

with each of those poor mothers or other relatives who had come to receive back the little ones who had been nursed from sickness to, alas in most cases, only comparative health within the hospital. From the corner where he sat Mark looked on, a more interested observer than he perhaps would have cared to own. For it might have touched a harder heart than his to note the love and eagerness with which almost all the children were greeted by those who had come to fetch them: while with the little ones themselves the pathetic part of that touching drama consisted in this —the wan smiles on the poor little pale faces, the tremulous mouths and tear-filled eyes of some, which were the only response their mothers' caresses called forth, showing how enfeebled even yet were the nervous systems of the youthful sufferers. Several, Mark thought, looked more fit to be entered as patients than dismissed as cured. There was one little fellow in particular who looked but about six years old, whereas he was in reality ten, and was carried as easily in his mother's arms as if he had been a mere infant. was the last to leave, and Mark noticed how sorry the kindly-faced nurse seemed to let him go; the careful directions she gave to the mother-not a very intelligent-looking person—the tender caress she gave the child at parting, the sorrowful smile with which she regarded the little pinched face as he lay in his mother's arms looking up at her; while the woman, for all response to the many directions given to her, said only,—

"Ah yes, Fräulein, I shall do all I can for him. He shall have the place close to the stove for his own always; and what more can one do?"

Nothing of this little scene was lost upon Mark where he sat in his corner not far from the door, and quite away from that part of the long room where now only two or three people were waiting.

As the door closed upon the mother and child, the nurse turned, facing Mark, and with the light from a window at her side falling full upon her. She was a woman of medium height, graceful in form and bearing, with a small pale face, a quantity of chestnut hair brushed back from the pure arch of the brow and surmounted by a little cap. And as Mark further noted the large dark eyes, so eager yet so steadfast, and the sweet expression about the mouth, there was revealed to him sufficient likeness to Paul Schlitter to make him believe that he now looked upon his sister.

He rose, and she came up to him. "You are the

gentleman who desired to speak to me?" she asked, in full yet quiet tones.

"Yes, Fräulein, I am he."

But strange to say, just for the time Mark Marksen had entirely forgotten that Paul had anything to do with his being there. His mind had been so impressed with the little scene he had just witnessed that, after a hardly perceptible pause, he said abruptly,—

"You seemed very sorry to send that child away, Fräulein; and he certainly looked anything but fit to go. Why could he not remain longer, till he was more nearly recovered at least? He looks far enough away from that now."

"He is very far from that," she answered gravely; "it is very doubtful whether he ever will recover."

"Then why do you send him away?" he asked, almost impatiently.

She smiled sadly. "Ah, mein Herr, I am not one of the ruling powers here; and indeed if I were, I do not know that it could be different. We have not nearly as many beds as are needed. We can seldom keep any case as long as we should like, because there are always so many others requiring aid."

"But—but that child looked as if he must die soon," said Mark, very much disturbed.

"He will die ultimately from the disease he has been treated for, in all probability, but it may not be for a long time to come. It is marvellous how tenacious of life some of these poor little things are, even with all their disadvantages."

"It seems a cruelty to send him away to die!" said Mark impulsively, and looking at the nurse with a certain harshness, almost as if he blamed her for it. "And he has gone, I suppose, to a wretched home, with no one to care for him who is possessed of even average intelligence."

The nurse looked up at him with a sad smile.

"It should not be so if I could help it," she said, simply and emphatically; "but, mein Herr, this is not a hospital for incurables. That is what is greatly needed; or, better still, a convalescent home, where poor children, and others also, might have, at any rate, every chance given them to live, if God wills it. They have no chance in their wretched homes, without fresh air and pure water and nourishing food, and with no one understanding rightly how to care for them; where even in many cases the very love of their mothers may injure them by injudicious treatment through ignorance. You know all this very well, no doubt, mein Herr," added the nurse, half

thinking that since her visitor had not explained his business he might possibly be an inspector appointed by government to visit the hospital in an informal manner.

"I!" said Mark, in answer to her last words; "I know nothing at all about it. I know nothing about any social questions at all. I have been nothing but a student and a recluse for nearly a quarter of a century. How should I know anything about it? I do not pretend to do so; only I have eyes to see."

"And a heart to feel, mein Herr," said the nurse gently; then lifting her eyes to his half shyly, "And I also feel for them. As I said, it should not be so if I could help it."

"I know that," he answered half angrily; "do you think I blame you?  $I \longrightarrow O$  Gott in Himmel, how could I dare to blame any one for such things?"

She looked at him half wonderingly, and then held out her hand, feeling a sort of friendliness towards this strange man.

"I must ask you to excuse me now, mein Herr," she said; "we are even more busy than usual just now, and I must return to my other duties."

"But I have never told you what I came for," said Marksen, taking her hand. "No; what is it?"

He told her simply, and in as few words as possible, and added,—

"And there is not the least reason for you to be anxious or to disturb yourself. Your brother will be in a short time better than he was probably before this accident. And my old housekeeper will take every care of him."

"God bless you, mein Herr," said Greta simply.
"I accept your kindness gratefully, and am sure that
Paul will appreciate it."

"Well; and I will bring you word in a few days how he is progressing, if I may be allowed. I can leave a note at the door with the porter."

"You are too good, mein Herr. I know how safe my Paul will be with you. And," she added, with a look which touched Mark greatly, "this instance of so great kindness to one poor child shows me how much you would desire to do for all poor suffering little ones if you could. You have truly a good heart, mein Herr. And so farewell; and thank you a thousand times."

She gave him her hand again, bowed, and left him. And Mark Marksen left the hospital.

A little later he was standing before the book-stall,

eagerly looking among various piles of books for one he sought. After a time he pounced upon one, and began with eagerness to dip into its pages. than he had thought he had discovered what he had been hoping for,-one more book bearing upon the subject which until yesterday—was it only so short a time ago?—had filled all his waking thoughts and many of his sleeping ones. He held the book in his hand. But in doing so there came to him an unaccustomed sense of temptation, and a still more unaccustomed sense of struggle against it. Ten marks was the price of the book—the utmost that he would allow himself to give for it. For several minutes he stood there balancing a weighty question in his mind. Should the money go for that, or for some other purpose?

Once again he scanned the pages of the book with a sigh. But at length he laid it down, with a resolute face and without a sigh. Then very swiftly Mark Marksen turned his back on the book-stall, and his face once more towards the hospital, within whose portal he presently stood, writing some words hastily on a page of his pocket-book. This he tore off, enclosed something within it, and gave it to the porter for delivery to Nurse Schlitter.

And when Margaretha opened the packet she found enclosed the sum of ten marks, with these words,—

"For the benefit of the child with whom you so regretted to part."

But that night, for long after the children and Anna were in bed, and until almost dawn, under a sudden and irresistible impulse, Mark Marksen was again in his laboratory, striving still after the solution of the secret.

### CHAPTER VIII.

# MIRIAM'S NOTE-BOOK.

PAUL has been with us for one happy week. Yesterday I feared that we should have only one day more together, because father had spoken of his remaining a week. But this morning it was settled that he should stay a little longer, as he must not walk yet, except about the house, as he is now beginning to do. Paul is such a comfort to me! With him always near me I feel almost as if I could talk again. Because with my tablets I can write what I want to say, and Paul can read it at once. To poor Anna that was always a difficulty, and for her I had to write so very large and plain, which took long, and was not at all like talking.

I tell Paul now I have three different ways of talking. I have my slate, on which I only write just ordinary wishes: what I wish Anna to do for me, about the daily work, and our meals, and other things. For Anna is so kind, she says,—

"You must not think, Liebling, that because you lie there so quiet and not able to move, that I will not have you learn to be a good housewife. For by those quick-seeing eyes, and the sensible look on your little face (that is what she says), I am able to judge that you will some day be a very good one, with teaching. So you shall see almost everything I do, and with some things you can even help; but only when you like, my child. And though I call you 'my child,' you are my little mistress, Fräulein, and I am your faithful old servant always, as well as your good friend."

So now I do help, as Anna wishes me to do. Sometimes I help to cut up vegetables for soup, and I am learning to darn, and do other needle-work; and then I have also my knitting, only sometimes I cannot get on with that, because I have no more wool. And Anna says we must wait till father gives her the next month's money for housekeeping—he does not like to be asked for money in the interval. I think we are very poor, and perhaps that is what makes poor father look always so anxious and often so sad—that, and the sorrow I know he bears always in his heart for mother and Ernst and Lisa.

But I was saying that I have now three means of

talking:—My slate, for commonest purposes. Then I have my tablets, for ordinary "chatter" with Paul; and I wish it understood that this is so like real talking that I like best to say of it, "I said," instead of "I wrote." And last of all I have this, my diary. And yet it is not a diary, because I pay no attention as a rule to dates-I just write down things as I remember them, and thoughts as they come into my mind; and Paul and I go over them together sometimes, and mean always to do so, from time to time. Because although Paul will be leaving us soon, he means often to come and see us; he says if I will be his friend so will he be mine—always! Paul says I have another way of speaking—by signs; by movements of my head and hands, and with my eyes. This is true; only I cannot say much so, and often wish I could say more. But Paul says I say a great deal in that way.

This morning, after Paul and Anna and I had taken our *Morgenbrod* (coffee and bread), father came in and sat down beside us. I like to see father's face now when he is talking to Paul. I always think then that he is remembering Ernst, though he likes Paul too for his own sake. This morning, after looking at him quietly for a few moments, my father said to Paul,—

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"I am going to see your sister and inform her of your progress. Shall I tell her that you are content to remain with us for a while longer, Paul?"

Paul flushed up.

- "How long, mein Herr?" he asked.
- "A week or two—three perhaps. Are you in a hurry to leave us?"

He looked up. "It is not that. I am happy here. How should I not be when you are all so kind?" he said.

- " How then?"
- "I ought to be at home working again."
- "You work at what? Ah, I remember. You carve in wood."
- "Yes, just simple things; but Carl sells them for me, and I gain a little money so."
  - "And Stümpfen—is he also a carver in wood?"
- "No, sir. But he understands it well; he trades in it. Orders from many people come to him, and he gets them executed. He is known to be a connoisseur. For himself, he does not make anything but picture-frames, and that is more to amuse himself."
  - "But he has taught you what you know?"
- "Yes; but that is not much," said Paul. "But I must go on working and try to improve."

My father was silent for a while, but presently he rose, saying,—

"Come here, Paul; come with me."

(Paul was able now to walk about the house.) They went away, and after a few moments Paul came hurrying back, crying to me with a joyful voice,—

"Look, Miriam! Your father has given me beautiful wood, and has lent me these fine tools; so now I can stay and work beside you."

My father, who had followed him, was looking at him with a pleased face.

"Ach, so!" he said; "but what will you work at now?" Paul looked round doubtfully.

Just then Leo came into the room, and laid himself down close beside me in his favourite position. I put down my hand and stroked his beautiful head, which the dear dog raised, pressing it against my hand, and looking up at me with, oh, such loving eyes.

"I know!" cried Paul suddenly. "I will carve Una and the lion."

My father laughed.

- "You are ambitious," he said.
- "I mean I will try to do it," said Paul, blushing, and hanging his head.
  - "Nay," said my father kindly, "thou needst not be

ashamed. Ambition is good; no man would do much without it. But all the same, I advise thee, my boy, to try the lion first alone—or rather try and represent as faithfully as possible this dog Leo. When that is well executed I have a model of a lion thou shalt copy. But the human figure, Paul, is too difficult for any but a highly-skilled artist to attempt with hope of success in wood-carving—wood being less adapted than any other material for the delicate touches needed to portray the features and expression of the human subject. Dost comprehend?"

"Yes, mein Herr, I think so," Paul answered thoughtfully; "but yet I will try it one day."

"Ach, that is well. So thou shalt, and I will help thee if I can," said my father.

He was going out of the room then, but turned again to say,—

"Paul, thou wilt not be able for that long walk through the forest and the city to thy home for some time yet. Wouldst like thy sister to come out here to see thee?"

Paul gave a little glad cry.

"Oh yes. Will you really ask her, mein Herr?—Ah, Miriam, how glad I shall be to show thee my dear Greta!"

And I too was glad; for Paul had talked to me of his sister, so that I seemed already to know her a little.

When father came home he told us that the Fräulein Schlitter had promised to come on Saturday when she expected to have all the afternoon and evening to herself. We were very glad. And when we told Anna she too was pleased, and said,—

"So! We must then make our plans; we must make a little feast, that so the Fräulein shall know she is joyfully welcome. And see now—how well things are arranged! To-morrow is the day when your father gives us the month's money. And next day, in the afternoon, I will leave Master Paul to take care of you, my child, and I myself will go to the city and buy some things we want—and wool for your knitting, little mistress; and also, perhaps, some things to make a fruit-cake for Saturday."

"Some apples," I said, "that so you may make us some of your nice Apfelbrod, Anna."

"Well, well," she answered, "we will see. But apples are difficult to get just now. In June it is both too late and too early for them."

Yes, it was June now, and lovely warm weather

we had had for two or three days past—not too hot here in the shady forest. In the daytime now my couch was drawn up close to the open window; and sitting or lying there I seemed to be able to look into the very hearts of the trees, all clad now in their fresh green dresses, while the birds sing so happily in their branches. Paul works beside me at his carving. Leo was already nearly finished on the Thursday, and he had only been begun on Tuesday. Anna and I thought the likeness wonderful; but Paul was not satisfied.

We have scarcely seen my father during these two days. I suppose he is very busy again; for he has been keeping himself shut up in his rooms, and he has that weary and anxious look that I know so well, though just lately he has had a brighter face. But on this Thursday morning early he came to us and said.—

"Paul, you should now walk in the forest. The weather is splendid, and it will be good for your health. You must no longer be shut up in the house. Go, but not too far."

Paul is a strange boy. Sometimes—generally—he is full of life and very gay, whistling or singing like

a bird as he goes about, and with so happy and bright a face. But at other times he is very quiet and dreamy, and will sit for a long time without speaking, with a far-away look in his eyes, and perhaps with a book open upon his knee, often the Bible. He loves to read the Bible; and I like it too, but, I must confess, not as Paul loves it. It is all so real to him, he says. His father used to read it with him a great deal, and from him he learned to love it.

There is another thing he loves, too, and that is He delights in hearing me play my zither, and often he will sing the hymns which I am able to play. And to see Paul sing is a wonderful thingeven more than to hear him. For then he has in his face a strange but beautiful expression, like a light shining from within; and when he is singing of faith in God and trust in our Redeemer, or of God's love to us and his own to God, I know well that he believes every word he sings; no one could doubt it who sees him, I think. Yet when I once said to him, "You are so good! I wish I were like you," he laughed, and said, "I good! Ah, you do not know! But one thing I wish, Miriam, that I had your patience and content; so bright and happy you are always, in spite of everything, you dear little maiden!" (Paul, I believe, considers me far, far younger than he is, though there are only two years between us.)

Generally I have not been disposed to talk much of holy things, but with Paul I can sometimes do so. And now I reminded him of the intense faith I knew he had in God and in His doing all for the best.

"Yes," said Paul, "that I do believe: that God makes all things work together for good, and that He will in some way give us all we ask for in the name of Christ and for His sake. But ah, Miriam, you do not know how impatient I am often that I cannot see that that is so always. There are so many things in the world that seem to want setting right-and one day or other will be set right; but you do not know how greatly I long for God to hasten the time, chiefly with regard to all the pain and sorrow and suffering in the world. I hate to suffer myself, and cannot bear to see it in others. And sometimes when I see it, I long so intensely for its instant removal that I could almost cry aloud to God to give the sufferer such faith as some had when Christ was on earth, that so they may be healed as they were."

On this morning, when my father came and told Paul he might go out, it did me good to see his face flush with delight at the idea. Gleefully he ran for his hat, and I heard him tell Anna about it, for she was busy in the kitchen. But when he came back, his bright and joyful gaze met mine for an instant, and I too was smiling with gladness at his pleasure. But all at once Paul's face changed, and he came and threw himself down beside Leo, close to my couch.

"O Miriam," he said, "if only you could come too! I have no right to be so glad while others suffer."

He bent his head down close over Leo for a moment. His face was thus turned away from me; but somehow I could not help fancying that Paul was crying. Quickly I wrote on my tablets,—

"Don't be sorry, Paul, or you will make me sorry. Go, and come back and tell me about what you have seen. And you know, dear Paul, all will come right some day; you must not be impatient."

Then I put my hand on his head, but he did not move; so I slipped it under his chin, trying to turn his face round. Then he looked up, and when he saw what I had written, he smiled, and jumping up, took my hand and kissed it. Then he went out quickly. And when he had gone I noticed that there was a tear on my hand.

Dear Paul! I feel that God has sent him to me to be my brother always instead of Ernst, because I was so lonely.

#### CHAPTER IX.

### IN WHICH GRETA VISITS THE CASTLE.

THE June sunshine, tempered by the coolness of the forest, shone in through the wide window of the living-room, and cast dancing leaf-shadows on its creamy-painted walls—leaf-shadows from the great and venerable beech which grew very near to the house, at the side of the window, so that Miriam could look into its green heart as she lay upon her couch. She called it her tree, and fancied that its fair branches bowed to her with a peculiar grace and kind-liness as she lay smiling at them, while she was quite persuaded that a pair of finches who had their nest in that tree had selected the site especially to give her pleasure.

Paul was away in the forest, gone to meet his sister half-way.

Anna, in a snowy cap, and with a clean large kerchief pinned across her ample shoulders, had been giving last touches to the room, dusting and setting in order; quite unnecessary touches, since an hour before everything had been made as immaculate as possible by her capable and industrious hands.

Miriam's dress of pure white cambric gave token also of Anna's skill, for the old woman took a pleasure in keeping her young mistress always dressed in white, as her mother had always loved to dress her—cambric in summer, serge in winter; for she said,—

"My Fräulein, it is true, is no longer a little child, but yet she looks as if she ought always to be dressed in white garments, like a little angel, as she is. And what more does it cost, pray? Nothing. If indeed we put out the washing, like some idle folk I remember in the city, who loved gadding about better than to stay at home and mind their business—if that were so with us, yes, it would cost very, very much. But it is not so. Never, while I have these strong hands, and these old but still serviceable feet to stand upon—never shall any other but myself wash my child's clothes."

Over Miriam's feet was thrown a gay quilted coverlet of flowered silk in patchwork—a relic of the past days; for Lisa and Miriam herself had helped the dear mother to make it.

Slumbering serenely at his mistress's feet, the Per-

sian cat lay curled up in a tight ball, though not, after all, so fast asleep as to preclude the opening of an eye and the setting back of an ear as a deep bay from Leo, acting as advanced-guard, announced the approach of the expected guest.

Anna stood waiting and courtesying at the door as Paul, with a beaming face, led his sister over the threshold.

"Fräulein Marksen," he said, "here I bring my sister to you.—Greta, this is Miriam."

For one moment Greta paused, and they looked at each other. Greta saw a pale-faced child, with a glad and eager look in her large hazel eyes, while her flowing hair shone like burnished copper in the sunshine that rested upon it.

Miriam saw a sweet-faced woman earnestly and smilingly regarding her with an expression of that child-love which is innate in the heart of every true woman. With something more, too—with a divine pity which went straight to the child's heart, causing her to stretch out her arms towards her visitor, while a smile of joyous greeting illumined her face. That mute, expressive welcome greatly touched Greta. In an instant she was kneeling by the couch, her arms encircling the slender form as she tenderly kissed

Miriam's alabaster cheek. Then she drew back her head and looked at her with admiring wonder. Could this lovely, spiritual-looking child be indeed the daughter of the gloomy, dark-visaged man who had twice visited her in the hospital?

"So," she said softly, but with a little of the surprise she felt in her voice, "this, then, is Herr Marksen's invalid child, of whom he told me."

Miriam nodded, with a still brighter smile; she was glad to think her father had spoken of her.

"Paul, you never told me what she was like," said Greta to her brother, who stood watching them with an interested face.

"No; I wanted to surprise you," he said. "It is no wonder, is it, that I took her for an angel when first I saw her in the evening light?" he added, laughing a little.

But Miriam, taking up her tablets, wrote something and handed them to Greta with a smile:—

"Were I an angel, I could fly; but I cannot even walk. Has not Paul told you?"

"Yes, he told me that, Liebchen," Greta answered, with a kiss.

"Poor Miriam!" said Paul, with a sigh; "she loves the forest so, yet she cannot walk in it. If only she were much smaller, or I much bigger, then I would carry her forth to see it."

"Yes, indeed," said Greta. "But does not your father carry you out, dear little one, in his strong arms?"

Miriam shook her head decidedly.

"Oh no," she wrote; "papa is always so busy, he would never have time to take me out."

She looked almost astounded at the idea. It seemed to her an incredible thing to think she could ever be carried in her father's arms; though she remembered that he had carried Paul while yet the boy was unable to walk from room to room.

Greta noticed the child's grave look, and became momentarily grave in her turn. But after a moment's thought she said,—

"Well, then, there are other ways; or at least one that I think of. My arms are strong; I am used to carrying people, children quite as big as you are. I could not, I think, walk about with you far. But I can carry you out to some sunny spot not far off, where you may sit for a while and look around at the forest scene, while you drink in a big draught of health and strength from the fragrant pine trees."

Miriam's eyes opened wide in glad eagerness. She was too excited now to have recourse to writing.

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"To-day—now?" said Paul, also a little excited at the prospect.

"Certainly; now, at once," was the answer.

And then Greta rose from her knees, and went to speak to Anna, who sat now with her knitting in the doorway leading to the inner kitchen.

"Is it safe? Will she not take cold?" asked the old woman, doubtful as to the expediency of the plan, though anxious too that her darling should, if possible, enjoy so great a pleasure.

"Safe!" repeated Fräulein Schlitter; "it will be the very thing to do her good. Listen, my friend. We have a long summer before us. Now, if the little girl can spend at least two or three hours of every fine day beneath the pine trees, it may strengthen her so greatly that we may look for wonderful results by-and-by. My brother has told you I am a professional nurse?"

"Ach yes, Fräulein; and also that your respected father was a doctor."

"So! Then you will perceive that I know something about it."

"Yes, yes. And so tell me, Fräulein, what you will have me do."

"Put the lightest and warmest wrap you have

around the child's head and shoulders. Get a big shawl or rug for her to lie on, and the pillows from her couch. My brother and I meanwhile will go and choose a spot as near here as possible, and then I will return and fetch her."

"But stay," added Greta; "should not some one tell your master what we are about to do? He may fear risk for his daughter, and should be reassured."

"Not he!" answered Anna hastily. And then seeing Greta looked a little surprised, she added quickly, "See, Fräulein, my master is a great student. He is shut up in his room, and I would scarce dare to go and tell him if the house were on fire. But I can do as I like about Miss Miriam; her father never interferes. We can do as we like, so that we do not trouble him."

"Then," said Greta, a little coldly, "we will not trouble him. The responsibility shall be mine, and I will gladly take it upon myself."

Then, with Paul for a guide, she went out and looked about for a favourable place to make a woodland couch for Miriam, soon selecting a spot at once sunny and shady; for though most of the trees just there were pines, there was one great beech which gave sufficient shelter from the sun's rays,

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and whose gnarled trunk of great girth would make a fine support for Miriam's pillows, while a soft elastic carpet of pine needles and moss lay all around.

Returning to the house, Greta went straight to Miriam, and finding her ready, lifted her in her strong young arms. But the inert, paralyzed limbs made the child's weight heavier than Greta felt she could carry for any distance. She could have carried her, as Anna was in the habit of doing, from room to room, or outside, across the enclosure; but doubting whether her strength would permit her to go further with so heavy a burden, she at once decided not to make the attempt.

"But you shall go, Liebchen, all the same," she said, kissing the little disappointed face.—"Paul, go and knock at Herr Marksen's door, and ask if he will be so kind as to come and speak to me."

Anna glanced up with a look of apprehension from Fräulein Schlitter to her brother, and back again. But the Fräulein gave her a smile and a little decided nod, as if to say, "Yes, I know what I am about!" and Paul was already away on his errand.

"Well, well," muttered Anna, but not so low that the others could not hear, "the Fräulein also doubtless takes this responsibility. And, besides, if the Herr Professor invites to his house so gracious a lady, he surely ought himself to give her welcome."

But Fräulein Schlitter herself had not thought about that, being troubled with no ultra-exalted ideas as to her own importance; though had she thought about it at all she would have felt sure, from what she had already seen of her host, that he at any rate had sufficient courtesy not to allow her first visit to end without greeting her, no matter in what study he might at present be immersed, nor how deeply.

Meantime Paul passed through the corridors to the other wing of the castle, and going through the bedroom where he himself still slept—for there were but few rooms furnished in the old place—he passed also through the studio to the door at the other end, and boldly knocked at it. He had never done so before, simply because there had been no occasion; but now that there was he did not hesitate, notwithstanding all Anna had said. From some words Mark Marksen had himself let fall on one or two occasions, as well as from what Anna said, Paul did believe that there was some secret hidden within that mysterious chamber; but he neither desired to pry into that secret nor believed his patron would think

him capable of it. Whatever the professor was to others, he had been very kind to Paul, and the boy felt towards him no sentiment but that of gratitude, not unmingled with affection, unless it were now and again some wonder that Herr Marksen showed such slight interest in his beautiful and afflicted child. Paul had to repeat his knock before it was answered by Mark's voice inquiring, "Who is there?"

"It is I, Paul," answered the boy. "My sister is arrived, and greatly desires to speak with you, sir."

There was a short silence, and then, still without opening the door, Mark said,—

"Well, I am glad she is come. Tell her that I will be with her in a moment."

Paul went back with his message, and was speedily followed by Mark.

Fräulein Schlitter went up to him and gave him her hand. "Thank you for coming to me now, mein Herr," she said; "and I hope and am sure you will excuse my asking for you when you know the reason."

"Welcome, Fräulein, to my poor home," said Mark.

"I hope they will all do their best to entertain you.
But what can I do for you?"

"I wish you to carry your daughter out into the

forest. It will do her good to lie there for a while this lovely day."

- "Will it? is it good for her?"
- "Certainly. You may trust me. Have no fear that it will harm her."

"I have no fear. You know better than I; though this I ought to have known," said Mark, with his abrupt manner. Then he went and stood close by his child's couch, looking down at her gravely. And Greta looked at them both.

### What a contrast!

The child, with her ruddy, flowing hair, her speaking, luminous eyes, her fragile delicacy of appearance, yet withal so happy and even animated an expression in the little face upraised to her father's, though there was also a slight look of trepidation and even of shyness, which Greta observed with something like pain. Was it indeed so new and strange a thing for this stern, careworn-looking man to do anything for his afflicted child? With something of the same look on his own face, Mark Marksen stood silent a moment. He was tall and very thin, but with broad shoulders and a certain stateliness of bearing not detracted from by the slight stoop which his studious and sedentary habits for so long past had doubtless produced. His

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hair, falling just below the nape of his neck, was of darkest brown streaked here and there with gray; but the beard and long moustache of a yet darker hue remained yet untouched by the snows of age.

As her father looked at her, Miriam suddenly stretched up her arms to him with so sweet a smile that it called one up, as if reflected, on his face. He raised his eyes, with the smile yet in them, from his child's face to Greta's; and then she saw how like his eyes were to his daughter's, and wondered at the transforming power of that rare smile as it lighted up the haggard face of the man. It was the first time Greta had seen him smile, she fancied.

And then Mark spoke.

"I have never carried you yet, Miriam; but doubtless I can do so if you will let me."

For answer the child put her arms a little higher with a glad look; and stooping his tall form, Mark lifted her carefully and easily, and stood a moment while Greta wrapped a shawl more closely about the slender, inert limbs.

"There, now we are ready," she said, giving a caressing pat to Miriam's cheek.

"Come, then," said Mark, "and show me where I am to take her."

And so they set out—Paul going before with rugs and a pillow, and Anna following with others; Leo, in a creditably subdued state of excitement, bringing up the rear. Greta walked by the side of her host, with her hand held lightly under Miriam's little feet. reaching the chosen spot, they found Paul arranging a most inviting-looking couch upon the sward. Other pillows were, however, yet needed; and they stood awaiting the coming of Anna, who soon arrived, panting with the exertion of a futile endeavour to keep up with her master's long strides. Paul relieved the old woman of her burden, and deftly arranged the pillows; and Mark knelt down with the child, that he might more easily place her upon the improvised couch. But looking up into her father's face, Miriam put her slender arms about his neck, clinging to him as no child of Mark Marksen's had ever clung to him before.

"She means, 'Thank you, Papachen,'" said Paul, interpreting for her. Miriam's eyes said that he was right; but Greta added,—

"She means more than that; she means, 'And I will be so grateful to you, father, if you will bring your little daughter here every fine day.'"

"Ach, is that so? Well, it must be so then, I sup-

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pose," said Mark, a little awkwardly. And he would have put the child down; but Miriam's eyes were yet fixed on his, and one arm still held him fast, while the other hand was held out to Greta.

"You wish to say something else, I know," said Greta. "You would say to your father what I used to say to mine when I was a little maiden and he held me in his kind arms—'Dear father, I love you so dearly.'"

Miriam smiled: that was what she wished to say. But her eyes filled with tears. Mark bent his head and kissed her twice as he had never kissed her before. Then he laid her down, quickly though gently, and as he signed to Greta to arrange her covering, she thought she saw a tear glistening upon his eyelashes. But he rose at once, and without a word more strode hastily away.

#### CHAPTER X.

# GRETA'S VISION-MARK'S CONFIDENCE.

"A NOTHER time," wrote Miriam on her tablets, "when you come again—very soon, I hope—we will get Anna to give us the Abendbrod out here."

"Yes," said Paul; "and you must also invite your father. And if I am then back with Carl Stümpfen, I too will come to see you with Greta."

"O Paul, don't speak of going away!" wrote Miriam.

The pleasant hour, so much enjoyed by all, was at an end. It was all that the careful nurse would permit for Miriam's first outing, and she now sent Paul to ask Herr Marksen to come and take his daughter back again. Half-way to the house Paul met Mark, who of his own accord was coming to see whether his services were yet required.

And in a little while Miriam was once more lying on her couch in the living-room, where Anna was

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beginning to make preparation for the evening meal. The air, strong and warm, had made the child weary, though only with a pleasant, healthy languor, as Greta thought.

"It will be best that she is quite quiet for a time," she said. "Go away, Paul, and occupy yourself elsewhere awhile."

"You can go to the studio if you will," said Mark, preparing himself to follow the boy. But he turned on the threshold, as if with a new thought. "And you, Fräulein, what will you do? Will it interest you at all to go over my dilapidated and desolate abode? There are a few interesting frescoes in one apartment, and also some rather quaint carving to be seen."

"Yes, I will gladly come with you, mein Herr," said Greta; and kissing Miriam, she rose and went away with her host.

After traversing the length of two or three corridors, they came to the other and older part of the building, and entered one of a really spacious and almost imposing suite of rooms, three very large and one smaller, all connected with each other. Long disused and neglected, they were a good deal out of repair, two deplorably so. But Mark drew his companion's attention to some really fine frescoes with which the

panels in each room were decorated, as well as the ceiling of one. There was also a good deal of wood-carving—two high mantlepieces, three doors, and a few pieces of antique furniture. But though these carvings were bold in design, and executed for the most part with a certain skill and vigour, Greta's eye, not untrained in this art, noticed that they lacked refinement and delicacy of finish even before Mark pointed out to her these defects.

"They are very well in their way," he said, "though evidently by no master hand."

Greta was lost in admiration of the rooms themselves. She stood in the centre of one, looking around with a sort of regretful pleasure in her face.

"What splendid rooms!" she cried; "oh, what a pity there should be no use for them!"

"You are right," said Marksen sadly; "and it is a shame also that they should have fallen into a condition so neglected, and that they are likely to remain so. It seems a mockery that they should belong to a poor man, as I am. Were I rich it would be one of my great pleasures to restore them to their original condition, or to improve upon it. But as it is—well, this is only a trifle; but there are other, more important things I would do were I rich. But it is all

of no use—hoping, striving, praying. The more I pursue riches the more they fly from me—" He stopped suddenly, with a quick look at Greta. Had he, carried away by his feelings, said too much? had she guessed anything—any hint about his secret? But no; it was most unlikely that that, of all things, should occur to her, however she may have interpreted his hasty words. As his eyes met hers for a moment she smiled at him, but vaguely, and with her glance returning again to scan the great room in which they stood.

"Do you know what I am thinking about?" she said. "I am picturing to myself this beautiful room newly furnished. Listen! In the windows there should be stands with flowers; all around on the walls there should be pictures—simple, but beautiful and attractive to the eyes of children; on each side of the room a row of cots; and pressed upon the pillow of each, at evening-time, the happy face of a little convalescent child, wrapped in the sweet sleep induced by pleasant play and invigorating air. And in that room there should be flowers also, and birds, and quantities of toys, and plenty of room for the little ones to run about and play. And no more should even one child return to its poor home till it had been

nursed back to real health and strength. O Herr Marksen,"—she turned suddenly round to him with a passionate pity in her face,—"if you but knew, as I do, the sort of homes that most of them go to, you would wonder with me, not that some of them leave the hospital only to die, but that any of the little ones can recover under such conditions."

Her passionate emotion sent a thrill through Mark, a thrill of mingled feeling in which self-reproach was not absent. Could this woman, so young and fair, feel thus to her heart's core the misery and pain of those to whom she was of no kin, and he had been cruelly unmindful of the needs and welfare of those bound to him by nature's closest ties—the wife he had loved and the children she had borne him?

He went to Greta's side, his face working with pain.

"You heap reproaches upon me," he said, almost passionately.

She looked up at him startled.

"Yes," he went on, in a low, agitated voice, as if impelled to say something of what was in his mind, of that which had been torturing him so often for some time past—"yes, because of the divine pity and love with which you are filled for those who are

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strangers to you; while I let those who should have been—who were dear to me—suffer and die almost unheeded by me. I neglected them; they suffered privations, silently, unselfishly, and fell at last a prey to the fever from which care and money might have saved them—the attention and the money which I in my selfish and blind brutality denied to them, to squander on the pursuit of a phantom! And now—I am well punished—they are gone, the wife and mother, the boy for whom I did feel love and pride, and one fair girl—all three are in their graves; and the only one left is always before me—a living reproach. How can I expect her to love me? I do not deserve that she should."

"Hush, hush, Herr Marksen!" said Greta, laying her hand gently upon his arm in her eagerness to soothe the unhappy man. Her face was pale with sympathy, and her eyes dwelt sorrowfully upon his pain-drawn face. "Hush," she said again; "this self-reproach and sorrow of heart I feel sure are morbid. If you have erred in the past, if you have even deeply sinned, I am sure also that you have greatly suffered, and believe that you have repented. And you must know without my telling you that with true repentance comes complete forgiveness."

"I know it," he said sadly, "and awhile ago I did repent. I even felt that God's forgiveness was mine. But I fell back; I resumed the pursuit of that which had been my bane before, and that did not show repentance. Remorse, if you will, that I have always felt; but true repentance cannot be unless amendment follows, that I know."

"O Herr Marksen, whatever it is that is keeping you back from a better life, you will now cast it away from you, I know. You do repent now, I feel sure of it. And if you do you have no right to doubt God's full forgiveness, nor His will and power to help you to overcome temptation and to stand firm against it, not in your own strength alone, but in His."

They were both silent for a while, looking out from the window by which they stood, though both unconscious of the fair scene before them. At length Mark Marksen drew a deep sigh.

"You have helped me already," he said, "and you are right. I do repent, and I will prove that I do. But," he added, after a moment and with a sad smile, "do you know what that will involve? The utter renouncing of the pursuit I have followed and the hopes I have cherished for nearly a quarter of a cen-

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tury will leave me for ever a poor man, with barely enough left from the fortune I once possessed to keep indigence from my home. I shall scarcely be able to give comforts to my own child, and must for ever renounce the schemes I have lately had of doing good to the poor for whom you feel such divine compassion. Had the wealth I have so often nearly held within my grasp become mine at last, you might have had your beneficent dreams realized, and have shown me countless other ways of doing good; but now that will be for ever out of my power."

She looked up at him gravely.

"But, Herr Marksen," she said simply, "it is never out of one's power to do some good. And I often think that it is possible, in trying to achieve great results, to miss the gold that might be ours in other ways."

"The gold!" he said, bewildered. Had this girl then divined the nature of his secret? Well, it was no longer of importance.

"Yes," she said softly,—" the gold with which loving hearts would gild our lives in so many ways."

"It is true," he said, after a moment. "I missed the gold of love with which those hearts now cold in death would fain have enriched my life." "It is not too late," she said; "there is Miriam. You are quite mistaken in fancying she does not love you. You have no right—forgive me that I speak so plainly—but you have no right to look upon her only with the eyes of self-reproach. She loves you dearly. Yes, Herr Marksen, and you, I know, feel most tenderly towards her, your dear little daughter. Do I not know? Did I not see in your face, as you held her in your arms, the look I have so often seen in my own father's face when his eyes, rather than his lips, were used to tell me how much he loved me?"

Mark was silent; he was far too greatly touched to speak.

At that moment Paul's voice was heard calling his sister.

Greta held out her hand to Marksen. "Have hope and courage," she said, with a smile which cheered him, "and cherish your love for your daughter; and do not fail to show her that you do love her."

He bent his head over the hand he held, then suddenly dropped it and stood erect.

"No," he said abruptly, turning from her; "I am not worthy."

Then he opened the door for her and followed her out.

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Paul, waiting not far off, announced that the evening meal was ready; and Greta, turning to Marksen, asked, "Do you not take this meal with us, mein Herr?"

"No," he answered; "you must please excuse me. I take my supper always later than this; Anna brings it to me to my own room.—Paul, see that you properly entertain your sister."

"But I shall see you again?" Greta asked; "for after supper I must set out at once."

"Assuredly I will see you again," he answered; "and also, Fräulein, you must allow me to accompany you home—or at least through the forest. Indeed, I cannot permit you to go alone; therefore there is perhaps no such great need for you to hurry away."

"No; if you are so kind as to conduct me, I can stay a little later."

"And perhaps," said Paul, "the Herr Professor will show you his studio then, where I work at my carving, you know, Greta.—Will you not, mein Herr? Because my sister would like to see your pictures, and those horses you have so beautifully carved."

"What!" said Greta, "is the Herr Professor also an artist in wood?"

"You will think so," answered the boy, "when

# GRETA'S VISION-MARK'S CONFIDENCE. 127

you come to see those groups of horses, so splendidly formed, and with such polished chestnut skins, and so full of life that they might be living fairy horses."

"Oh, then, I must certainly see them," said Greta, smiling at Mark. "You will show them to me, will you not?" she added.

"Assuredly," he answered.—"Come when your sister is ready, Paul, and let me know."

With a little courteous bow Mark turned away, and going to his laboratory, shut himself up, not to work but to think.

Some time later, on a second summons from Paul, the professor rose from the table, this time with alacrity, and with a brighter and more eager look on his grave face than it had worn for long. He left the laboratory, entering the studio, and closing the door behind him. Then he stood silently considering a moment, with a slight frown on his face.

"Yes," he said inwardly at last, as his brow cleared; "this is the first step I will take to show myself, at least, that I am in earnest—a pledge to myself, although probably she will not know the significance of anything she may see. But this true-hearted maiden shall be the first to cross the threshold

of the chamber that holds the secret which now I shall never solve."

There were but two ways of entry to the studio—the one through two or three rooms and passages in the older wing of the house, and finally through the laboratory, and the other through Mark's bedroom. He went in search of his guest, and conducted her in silence by the roundabout way to the door of the laboratory; this he unlocked, and they passed in together.

Greta found herself in a very long and very lofty room, with a large stove at one side, upon which, as it appeared to her from the cursory look she gave around, were cooking-vessels of some description. Her quick eyes noticed also, yet without seeming to do so, a variety of chemical utensils, phials, and crucibles; a great many books on shelves and tables, and even on the floor, with a litter of papers and other things. But of all this paraphernalia Greta took real note of but one thing-the appalling amount of dust with which nearly everything was covered! She longed to be alone in the room for an hour or so to set matters straight in that way. studio Paul waited for them, eager to point out to his sister the beauties of his friend's carving. And Greta's admiration satisfied even Paul, and more than satisfied Marksen, who stood by regarding Greta's face, which testified to her delight far more than her few words of appreciation.

Then going to a cupboard, Mark took from it a carved group, brushed off the dust, and silently placed it on a stand before Greta, who uttered a little cry of admiration. It was an admirably-carved group, representing "The Chess-Players," after Retzsch, standing about a foot high, and exquisitely finished as regards every detail; so it seemed to the two who were looking at it with so great and evident delight.

"O mein Herr—O Greta!" cried Paul excitedly, "what would Carl not say to this, what would he not give to see it?"

"You think it fine—you like it?" Mark asked of Greta.

"Like it!" she repeated; "O Herr Marksen, it is exquisite!" And then, as a sudden idea occurred to her, she added eagerly, looking up at him with a smile, "If you can carve like that, you have the means of converting wood into gold."

Mark made no answer then; but later, when he was walking by Greta's side on her homeward way through the forest, he said,—

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"Is it true that you find my carving so fine?"

"Indeed yes," she answered earnestly; "and do not again talk of being poor while God has given you such means of acquiring wealth."

"Strange," he said softly, "that I never myself thought of turning that talent to account. It was long, long ago that I carved that group, and I have done almost nothing since."

"Another instance," she said, "of passing by tangible gold for its shadow;" and she looked up half laughing.

But Mark looked grave. Did this girl guess his secret by intuition? Well, some day, perhaps, he would tell her.

"You did not discover it yourself, perhaps," said Greta presently, "because being so true an artist you were never satisfied. Herr Marksen, may I come again next Saturday, and may I bring Herr Stümpfen to see your carvings?"

"Come whenever you will," he said abruptly; and then more gently, "You are too good to interest yourself thus in the matter. And I shall certainly be glad if Herr Stümpfen will come."

#### CHAPTER XL

## MIRIAM'S NOTE-BOOK-PROGRESS.

SUMMER is still with us, but is passing away too quickly. The nights are getting colder; soon after sundown we are glad to draw near the stove. And often when we are out in the forest we hear the wind in the pine tops, not always whispering, but sometimes talking shrilly of the shortening days and lengthening nights, and of the snows which winter has already scattered on the mountain tops in lands farther north than ours.

"And be glad, O ye fir trees," cries the wind, "that nature's God has dressed you in everlasting garments of green; that you do not stand unclad and shivering exposed to winter's cutting blast in your cold northern climes." Then the great beech at whose feet I lie tosses his branches, rustling with indignation. "And why, I pray you tell me," he cries, "are these more favoured than I and my brothers?" Then the wind

is silent; but after a moment he says softly, "God's ways are not the same with all, but one thing seems clear: in the winter you have not to disperse your sap to give life to your leaves; and so you go on, perhaps, gathering up your forces silently and surely, to burst forth again into yet greater and more glorious beauty than ever after the winter is past."

But winter is not here yet. We are only at the end of August, and if we have a warm September I may yet have many hours out of doors. Dear Greta! May God bless her for thinking of so great a pleasure In so many ways it makes me happier. for me. I lie in the forest in the golden summer days, looking straight before me down the mossy glade, or up, up, into the hearts of the dear trees, getting peeps between their ranks or through their branches at the deeply blue sky, then I have a feeling of such wondrous happiness, it is partly like a beautiful dream, but more like a still more beautiful reality. then that mother and Ernst seem nearer to me than at any other time—even nearer, I think, than when I used to lie alone and think of them in the winter evenings.

Here is another consequence of Greta's good plan

I have been twice carried in my father's arms, we seem—he and I—to have learned to know each other so much better. And I know now that he loves me. I always loved him, though until almost lately he has seemed nearly a stranger to me; and—I will whisper it to my book—I used to think he did not love me. But now I am sure he does. And he knows that when he lifts me, and I put my arms close about his neck, it is not only that I may be safer, but because I love him, and wish to show him that I do. And my father now never puts me down without first kissing me. Dear father! I wonder if he knows how much happier I am now because he is so different, and because he looks so much happier.

Yes, we are all happier now than we were, and everything seems so much brighter than when first father and Anna and I came to live here in the forest. Even Anna seems happier, and is almost gay at times; I have lately often heard her singing to herself a little "Volkslied" she hears me play upon my zither. And the other day I wrote,—

"Now tell me, Anna, is it not a good thing that Paul came to us, and also that his sister comes so often? You were at first jealous of Paul—you can-

## 134 MIRIAM'S NOTE-BOOK-PROGRESS.

not deny it, Anna—but now you no longer are. Is it not so?"

"Ach yes," she answered. "I will allow that Master Paul has brought nothing but good to the place. Although—and for that also I thank Heaven fervently—he is none of your noisy, loud-voiced, shouting boys, yet we are all certainly more lively than we were before his coming. I do not wish to deny it—no! And now, Liebchen, that your father's face brightens when he looks at you as well as at Master Paul, I am quite content that he should be here—oh yes! And besides that, my child, is it not enough for thy old nurse that when you have one of your terrible headaches Master Paul can so quickly cure it? though, thank the good Lord, you no longer suffer so often with them since you have begun to grow stronger."

Yes, that was true. Whenever now I had one of my headaches, Paul would sit by me and gently stroke my temples with his finger-tips; and then very soon my head would begin to get better, and I would fall asleep, to find when I awoke that the pain had quite gone.

Many things have happened during the last two

months — one a most delightful and unexpected thing.

It was on a Saturday when Greta was with us. She and Paul and I were all in the forest, Greta and I with our knitting, and Paul now wandering about, now returning to us bringing some flower or insect or other treasure to show us. From where I sat I could see right down the wide glade which opened out before us, and I think I was not so much occupied with my knitting as in watching the dear little squirrels jumping about and playing with each other in the trees; while also on the mossy sward the pretty rabbits would frisk about, sometimes sitting quite upright for an instant, and then at some slight sound, with their tiny white tails upraised, darting quick as lightning into their burrows, or scampering away into hiding in the thick long grass. Sometimes, but not often-for they seldom came so near to this open glade, which leads direct to the town-I would catch a glimpse of the red deer crossing the path in the distance, or of one solitary one standing to rub his antlers against a tree. I would have liked them dearly to come nearer, but they were too timid for that.

On the particular afternoon I am speaking of, just

when I really was paying some attention to my knitting, Greta said suddenly,—

"Here comes your father, Miriam, and another gentleman with him."

"Herr Stümpfen," I scribbled, for that gentleman had been once before lately to see my father's woodcarving.

"No," said Greta; "it is both too tall and too thin for Herr Stümpfen."

"Tourists, perhaps," I thought, for being just then intent on taking up a stitch I had dropped, I did not look up. Greta seemed puzzled.

"I am sure it is your father," she said—"I should know him farther off than this; but whom can the other gentleman be? Is it any one you know, Miriam? for you told me you never had visitors."

Then I looked up. They were now near enough for us to distinguish faces clearly, and both raised their hats as our eyes met. And then how delighted I was! For the strange gentleman was no other than my dear, kind Dr. Henschel, who had been so good to me when I was in the hospital. Ah, at that moment how I longed to speak! But I could not—I could not. Only I think my face must have spoken for me as I held out both my hands; and the

Herr doctor knelt down beside me, taking them in his, and crying,—

"What then, my little one? art so truly glad to see thy friend Henschel once more?"

For answer I squeezed his big hands as tight as I could, looking into his kind face with such pleasure; then he kissed me on the forehead and bowed to Greta, who was looking at us with a smile. My father then introduced them to each other, and both gentlemen sat down beside us. But my doctor explained that he could not stay long. He had but been to visit a patient in the city, whom he desired to see again that evening before returning by train to his own town—where we also used to live. In the street he had encountered my father, and having some time on his hands, had invited himself to walk home with him, that he might see his little former patient.

"The forest, or something else, has done wonders for you, my child," he said. Then he glanced at Greta in her pretty nurse's dress.

"Is this lady your nurse?" he asked.

"No," Greta said, answering for me; "but I am her friend, and do what I can for her." And then she went on to tell the doctor of her engagement as nurse at the hospital in the neighbouring city.

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"You know something, then, about illness," he said.

"Indeed yes," said Greta; and then she asked the doctor whether he thought it at all likely that with returning strength I might, as all hoped, perhaps regain my lost voice and walking powers.

"Let us come to the house, and there I will look at her throat, and shall then be able to give a better opinion," said Herr Henschel.

So my father carried me home, and then I was left alone with the doctor and Greta. And after a little my father was called in, and I saw how anxiously he looked at Herr Henschel.

"Yes, Herr Marksen," said the kind doctor, taking my father's hand and leading him to my couch, "the first is very probable. We must not be in a hurry, but I think the time may certainly come when your little daughter will be able to tell you in words how much she loves her father."

I held out my hand, and my father stooped and kissed me. Then his eyes once more questioned the doctor's face.

But Herr Henschel slightly shook his head. (He had told me about it before, knowing I wished to hear the truth.)

"For that I cannot say," he said. "For the present

we can only be patient, and hope for the best. Byand-by I may be able to judge better; and I will certainly see her again, though there is nothing more to be done, except that skilful rubbing of the limbs which Fräulein Schlitter tells me she is already trying."

"Is there nothing else whatever to be done?" asked my father sadly.

"Nothing but to leave her to nature and to nature's God," answered the doctor gravely.

That evening when Anna and I were alone, with only Leo for our companion, we had a little rejoicing together, because of the good news Dr. Henschel had told me. For it had really come to me like unexpected good news; because although at the hospital it had been said that I might perhaps regain my voice, I had always fancied there was only a very slight hope. Only Paul had always felt certain that I should one day speak again, and he often said to me, "Ah, Miriam, if you only had more faith you should be as sure as I am." And I know that he prayed night and morning always that it might be so.

After that visit of Herr Stümpfen, when he had commissioned my father to execute some of the orna-

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mental carving for a new grand-ducal palace, a proposal had been made by my father that Paul should remain with us as his pupil both in his own art and in other studies. We had all been sitting together in the evening when my father proposed it, and I remember how pleased both Paul and Greta were, and Greta's eyes were filled with tears as she smiled and said,—

"O mein Herr, Paul could never have any other opportunity for his education half so good. But how could we ever repay your kindness?"

"His companionship will more than repay me," said my father. And after a moment he added, "And you—you must come as often as you can, and see how he is getting on. Already you have done Miriam good."

It was therefore settled so, and everybody was very glad, except perhaps poor Herr Stümpfen; for now that Paul would no longer share her lodging, Greta had decided to live in the hospital, as they wished her to do. So Herr Stümpfen was left alone in his home, and when he came again he told me he was quite verloren. But still I believe he was, all the same, very glad that Paul should have this good opportunity for a fine education; for my father, it

seems, is a very clever man, and can teach him many things, perhaps better than if Paul went to the university. But I said to Herr Stümpfen that he must not feel *verloren*, or I should be sorry that we had taken Paul away from him. And then he said,—

"Nay, mein Kind, I am very willing to give him up for his good, and especially to you."

"Thank you," I said. "And you know, mein Herr, Paul and his sister will both see you often, and you must come here to see us when you have time."

And he does come often. And also he has brought me the bullfinch, which Paul is teaching to whistle "Wär' ich ein Vögelein." My cat regards it with very wicked eyes, and with some contempt, as if to say, "Wert thou a little bird indeed! well, thou art a little bird. And wert thou free—well, thou wouldst not long be free."

On that evening, some time after Dr. Henschel's departure, my father and Paul accompanied Greta home through the forest, and I lay comfortably in bed raised against pillows, and with my old Anna rejoicing over me about the good news. Then I asked her for my zither, and played one of my blithest songs, which Anna sang, with her head nodding to the time, and her little black eyes as

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bright as those of Bullie, who also was trying to join in the song.

"There, my good dog," said Anna to Leo, when she had ended her song, "so soon wilt thou hear thy mistress sing. Only she will sing with a voice so sweet and clear, not like that of thy old Anna. Dost hear? thou wilt hear thy mistress's voice soon. Is it not good news?"

Then Leo barked joyfully three times, and began to prance about just as if he understood and was dancing for joy; and puss stretched himself, and gave him a stroke with his paw, as if to say, "Be not so frivolous, thou great beast. Thou art surely big enough to know better than to behave thus, be the provocation never so great."

We are no longer so poor as we were. My father begins to earn money with his wood-carving. He told me so. And he has bought nice new clothes for me, and some for Anna. Also he has given me books, and money for Anna to buy what materials I want for my work. And now, instead of having generally only broth and cabbage, and perhaps a little sausage, for dinner and supper, we have often nice good meat and other things.

And now that I have plenty of books and work I can employ myself well, and the time never seems long, which is a good thing, because since Paul has become a student I do not see nearly so much of him, though he and Anna and I still have our meals together in the living-room. Father now does not shut himself up so constantly alone in that mysterious room, where not even Anna and her duster were ever allowed to penetrate. Still nobody else goes in there; but generally father is at work with Paul in the studio, and sometimes they bring their books and sit with me, that I also may benefit a little by Paul's lessons.

#### CHAPTER XII.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS.

ON a wintry morning in December, Mark Marksen stood in his laboratory reading a letter which he had just received, and which seemed to cause him some annoyance, though in the main it really contained good tidings.

He stood in front of the large open fireplace, his foot upon the low marble rail, his arm upon the mantle-shelf, while the hand supported and slightly raised his face, on which there was a passing shadow of annoyance. Despite that, however, Marksen's appearance had greatly altered for the better, especially during the last few months. Grave and almost stern of aspect still, and careless in attire, there was yet something very pleasing and attractive about him. He now looked no more than his real age—forty-five; his hair was no longer in disorder, his moustache and beard were trimmed, while his dress was rather pic-

turesque and artistic than "outlandish" as formerly. The face was less haggard than of yore, the coldness had passed from it; and though some sadness lingered, there was a new brightness in the clear hazel eyes, while both his looks and bearing had more of frankness and of self-reliant manliness than formerly, notwithstanding a certain air of diffidence which made itself apparent occasionally.

Twice over Mark read the letter he held, and stood by the fire still reflecting upon it.

"Yes," ran his thoughts, "in a measure it is as satisfactory as I could wish. Henschel's opinion after his many experiments confirms my own. The combination of drugs forms a pure anæsthetic, perfectly harmless, and with no ulterior ill effects whatever, even when in constant requisition. 'A perfect and inestimable boon,' he calls it, 'to suffering humanity.' And he advises me at once to patent it. Well, that I can and will do. But as to his other opinion, that if I could only properly advertise it there is a large fortune in it, that I cannot do not even were I to devote to it every penny of the money I now make, save what is needed for bare necessities. And that I will never do. Miriam shall never again, while her father can work for her, know what it is to want for

a single thing that can in any way add to her comfort. Neither shall my secret purpose, my new secret "-he smiled gravely-"neither shall that be one day retarded in its accomplishment by taking even a part of my certain profits to strive for what would after all be uncertain ones. No "-with another smile and a shake of the head-"not though the tempter is already whispering to me of the great sums I might thus win, the immense amount of good I might do It would be only chance; and for with the money. the future I will fling chance to the four winds of Besides," he added after a moment, and heaven. shrugging his shoulders, "were I to devote to the purpose every penny I have yet laid by, or can hope to lay by for a year or two to come, it would be but a drop in that ocean. No: I will patent it certainly, and at once; and for the rest, I must be content for it to become gradually known, advertising it now and again as I can in the daily journals perhaps. Sooner or later it may make a mark; and Henschel, at any rate, will do all he can for it,"

A little while after, dressed to go out, and with his hat in his hand, Mark stood by Miriam's couch to bid her at once good-morning and good-bye, as he was going to the city for the greater part of the day.

Paul had been spending a day or two with his friend Carl Stümpfen, to help him in constructing a sort of new wing to his aviary, necessitated by the increase of his feathered family; but he was to return with Mark that night.

Miriam's face was beaming with pleasure when her father sat down for a few moments beside her. In her hand she held an open letter.

"What is it—good news, Liebchen?" he said, taking it from her. And as he read it he looked almost as pleased as Miriam did. The letter was from Greta Schlitter, saying that as the children's fête at the hospital was to be put off till new year she would be at liberty to come to them, as they had wished, the next night, Christmas-eve, and remain till the day after Noël.

"So," Mark said with a smile, giving back the letter, "this pleases thee, Miriam. And I too am glad; while Paul, perhaps, had better remain with Stümpfen, so that he can conduct his sister here to-morrow evening. Shall it not be so?"

But Miriam shook her head; she missed Paul, and desired his quick return.

"No, no," she wrote; "you fetch her to-morrow, Papachen."

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"Yes; well, it shall be so," said her father. "And now, my child," as he rose and stood buttoning his overcoat, "what shall I bring thee for thy Christmas gift?"

For answer Miriam handed him a slip of paper, and smiled up at him as he stood reading it.

"A big doll—a cheap kind will do; but, if possible, as big as a young child. I want to learn to make useful clothes for poor little children. Anna will help me to make them; but I do want to be able to try them on when they are made."

Her father laughed.

"Ach, so!" he said; "you shall have your wish if I can get it. But no fine wasp-waisted lady then will do, I suppose—no fashionable waxen beauty?"

"No, no," exclaimed old Anna; "it must be, Herr Professor, a good substantial composition doll, as big and as stout, if possible, as a child of eighteen months or two years. That is what we want. It will certainly be too big for a Christmas angel to set at the top of the fine fir tree Master Paul has marked to dig up to-morrow morning; but it can, at any rate, be placed under the Christmas-tree."

"And for the top I must also bring a small waxen one, I suppose, eh, Miriam?"

Miriam nodded, smiling. And her father stooped and kissed her, saying.—

"Good-bye, my child. Be sure I will do my best." For nearly three months past, Miriam and Paul and Anna had been gradually preparing and collecting together a variety of things, toys and more useful articles, with which to decorate the Christmas-tree which Paul was to dig up from the shrubbery adjacent to the castle. There would be first little presents from each to each, and the rest of the things were to be given to Greta for the little folk in the hospital.

As soon as Mark Marksen had transacted his business in the city, he made his way to the house of Carl Stümpfen, wishing to tell him at once of the result of Dr. Henschel's experiments.

"Did I not know it?" cried the old man, with a beaming face; "did I not say so? Herr Marksen, I warmly congratulate you! You will be a benefactor to suffering humanity; and not only that—you will certainly realize from this, at no distant date, a great fortune. It may not be at once—no; but the time will come, oh yes! Patent it by all means, and directly. And you will see, the money will somehow be forthcoming for the biggest advertisements the world has ever seen; and then you will say, 'The

old Stümpfen was right; oh yes, he knows a thing or two!" And Carl tapped his nose, and hugged himself with pleasure as Paul and Mark joined him in a hearty laugh.

"Have you seen your sister, Paul?" Mark asked.

"Yes; she was here yesterday for a little while, and told me that she will be able to join us to-morrow."

"And our dear Gretchen was a little sorrowful," said Carl, "because she had yesterday to part with one of her little patients to send to its poor, poor home. Ah me! ah me!"

"I have promised Greta to go there and see how it is and let her know," said Paul. "Not that she can do much to help it, poor little thing!"

Mark looked thoughtful.

"Are you going now?" he asked after a pause.

"Yes; I was just setting off."

"I will come with you then. And I want your help to buy a gift for Miriam which she has set her heart upon.—Farewell, Herr Stümpfen. Do not forget your promise to come on Christmas Day and dine with us."

"But my birds—my little children!" exclaimed Carl, with hands outstretched in deprecation and his shoulders up to his ears.



"Ach! leave them a double supply of food and water," said Mark, "and it may be that they will appreciate your presence still more when you return for your long absence.—Come, Paul."

As they went along Mark told Paul about the sort of present Miriam had commissioned him to buy for her, and en route they visited two or three toy-shops, hoping to meet with what was required. But in vain. There seemed considerable difficulty in meeting with a young person of the requisite proportions, and Mark at length decided to pay a visit to the factory before returning home to see if such an article might be met with there.

Meantime they came to the abode of Madame Schmidt, the much-encumbered mother of Greta's little patient. Paul was known to the woman, and she willingly admitted him and his companion into her poor dwelling. The place seemed to Marksen to swarm with children, some of whom came clamouring round Paul, while one or two devoted themselves to staring stolidly at the strange gentleman. Paul had been known to this family ever since the lad as a youngster of seven years old had begun to accompany his father occasionally in his visits to his poor patients and friends.

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"Now, Martin and Friedel," said Paul, putting aside the noisy little lads, "do be quiet if you can; and you too, Hans. Were you not all wild to have sister Ella home from the hospital? Well, you have got her; and now you must be good to her."

"So we are," said Martin: "did I not yesterday want her to have my share of the soup at supper?"

"Oh yes," remarked Hans; "but you knew she had not finished hers, and so was not likely to take it."

Martin's big blue eyes glanced reproachfully at his brother.

"No," he said, "I did not see that at first. And I would have let her have it, Hans, if she had wanted it."

Meantime Herr Marksen was talking to Madame Schmidt—or rather was being talked to by her.

"Oh yes," she was saying, "I do what I can, for her and all. But I ask you, mein Herr, what can one do, with a man who earns but the miserable wages of a journeyman tailor at a ready-made goods store? And with rent so high and with five boys under ten, and one's hands tied with a troublesome baby—poor thing! one knows he cannot help it with his teeth cutting. And then to have this poor child returned helpless on my hands. God bless her! It is not that her mother does not love her; but I ask you, how

can I do well for her and care for her as she should be cared for, and give her the delicate food that she should have? Delicate food! Black bread and potatoes, and now and then a little broth and sauerkraut—that is our usual fare; and on Sundays perhaps an atom of beef with preserved cranberries, or a morsel of sausage. And is it not in itself a misfortune to me that my only girl should be no help to her mother? though God knows I love her all the better for it, the poor maiden! But still I do wish they had kept her at the hospital while this hard cold weather lasts, she had more comforts there, you seemore comforts and less noise, though for that I do my best. But I ask you again, what can one do with such a troop of healthy, noisy boys? But they are good boys, every one of them, though I, their mother, say And now, mein Herr, unless you have anything it. more you wish to say to me, you might come and speak to Ella."

Following the good Frau to the other end of the rather long but narrow and low-pitched room, Mark presently stood beside a bed-place, built into the wall, where a little child, strikingly delicate in appearance, lay propped against a pillow. In size this child seemed not more than three years old; but its

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poor little face, so wan and shrunken, and its tiny, attenuated hands and wrists, without a trace of the round softness of infancy, led Mark to suppose that she must be much older, so that he was not greatly surprised when her mother informed him that Ella was almost nine years old.

"Can she walk?" was the first question he asked.

"Oh yes," the mother answered; "there is nothing to prevent—nothing wrong with her limbs, thank God. Only Ella is always too weak to care to walk; she likes best to lie still—not in bed always. Often she is able to get up and sit in a chair and play, or walk about a little—that is in the ward, when she was still in the hospital. But here, as you see, there is no room for her to move about; we are so crowded, and the boys are so rough often, though they do not mean it, poor fellows!"

Mark turned aside from the child, who had been regarding him in wistful silence, and asked,—

"It is not an incurable case?"

"No, no; only so lingering. But they say, if for a long time—perhaps a year or more—she could have always plenty of fresh air and good food and quiet, Ella might then be as strong as any."

Mark Marksen stood silently reflecting. He was

revolving in his mind a certain question. Presently he turned to the mother.

"Supposing," he said, "that there had been a convalescent home, to which the child had been sent from the hospital, would you then have gladly let her go for some months?"

"Oh yes, indeed. But there is no such beautiful place."

But I myself live in the forest, surrounded with the pine trees, where the air is very pure and healthy, giving much strength to feeble constitutions. such as your child has. I have a daughter who has also been very ill and delicate for a long time, but who has grown much stronger since we came to live in the forest. She, I well know, will welcome the child; and the good old woman who is at once my daughter's nurse and our housekeeper will care for the little one as well as for her own charge. What do you say? I am no wealthy man, but I will gladly afford your child shelter and nourishing food; and that, with the quiet comfort of our home and the pure strong air around it, may probably be of great service to her. At any rate we can try it; and I will certainly do so if you are willing, and if Ella will come with me."

### CHAPTER XIII.

## MIRIAM'S SECRET.

POR answer the mother turned to the child with a bright and hopeful look, though her eyes were not undimmed by tears, and said,—

"Thou hear'st what the gentleman says; wilt go with him, my Ellalein?"

The child looked gravely from one to the other, and then said wearily, and with an old-fashioned air which was very touching,—

"I don't know. I would like to stay with mother; only I give her so much trouble, and she has baby to care for, and she cannot do everything. It would have been better for me to stay in the hospital with Nurse Greta, only I could not."

Paul was standing by, holding the child's hand.

"If you go with this gentleman to his home," he said, "you will see Nurse Greta; she often comes there."

"Yes," said Mark eagerly, inspired in his turn with persuasive arguments; "and also, my child, you will have Herr Paul there always, because he lives with me; and you are fond of Herr Paul, are you not?"

"Yes," Ella admitted; "because, you see, I have known him ever since he was a little boy. I can remember him when he was only ten years old; can't I, Master Paul?"

"Certainly," answered the boy, laughing. "And how old were you then, Ella? about forty?"

"Oh no," she gravely answered; "I was only four.

I remember it all very well, because you brought me
an india-rubber doll in a wooden cradle that squeaked

—I mean the doll."

As she spoke the gravity of the little face suddenly broke up, and she looked at Paul with a brilliant smile, which lent her a strange weird beauty for the moment; though the large deep-blue eyes were her only good feature, for the little rings of hair with which the small head was closely covered were now too decidedly red for beauty, though later, perhaps, they might darken into a rich auburn.

"Well, wilt thou come with us, and so leave thy mother more time to care for baby and the boys?" asked Paul.

- "When?" asked the child, holding out her hand to her mother, though she looked at Paul.
- "To-day, is it not?" asked Paul, glancing at Mark, who nodded; and Paul continued, "To come back with us and see the kind little lady who lives in the house in the forest, with a big, beautiful dog and a fine black cat—"
  - "That sounds like a fairy tale," said the child.
- "It is a fairy tale—a true one. And to-morrow there will be a great Christmas-tree, which the fairies perhaps will help to dress."
  - "Shall I see them?"
  - "Certainly."
- "And," put in Mark, really entering into the spirit of the thing, "we are going home nearly all the way in a carriage; but we shall stop once at a shop to buy a waxen angel for the top of the Christmas-tree."

Ella looked at him severely.

- "It ought to be a Christ-child," she said, "not an angel; they always have a Christ-child for hospital trees."
- "There shall be a Christ-child," said Paul, who was maturing a special plan in his head.
- Then, after a little more talk with the mother, Mark and Paul left the house, returning a couple of

hours later to find the child ready to go with them. Herr Marksen made the good woman a little present, and said that Ella's clothing, while she was with them, would be his daughter's care. And Paul promised to bring Madame Schmidt news from time to time about her little daughter.

Both mother and child bore the parting with equanimity, whatever they may have felt, both apparently possessing rather philosophical dispositions; a relief to Herr Marksen, who had rather dreaded a scene at parting. One or two of the boys seemed a little inclined to howl, being affectionately disposed towards their sister, and unwilling to lose her again so soon. But a packet of sweets administered by Paul proved consolatory, at any rate for a time, though it caused a little delay, the boys insisting that they should wait till the packet was opened and a share given to Ella.

"You have not now bought the great doll for Miriam, Herr Mark," said Paul, as they left the city and turned into the carriage-drive which went through a part of the forest to within a short distance from the castle.

"No," answered Mark, glancing at the child, who lay warmly wrapped up on the opposite seat of the

carriage; "but I have a substitute which Miriam will still more appreciate, or I am much mistaken."

One more purchase Mark had made on their way—a light iron bedstead, with everything needed for it, which was now packed securely in and outside the carriage; for it was no wish of Mark's that either Miriam or Anna should be inconvenienced in any avoidable way by his philanthropy.

Miriam's pleasure, as her father had foreseen, was unbounded. To have a little living creature to care for instead of the great doll she had been expecting! By-and-by, when the first excitement was over, she wrote for her father,—

"It is delightful! I can kiss her, and she can kiss me back again; her little hands can press mine; she can talk to me. Oh, how much better this is than a doll! And, dear father, how good of you to think of it, for her sake as well as for mine; and how delighted Greta will be!"

And when Mark read what she had written, he felt amply rewarded already for his kind act.

"And you, Anna," Mark had said,—"I fear this will give you a little extra work; but I feel sure you will not grudge it for the poor little one."

"No, indeed, Herr Professor," answered the old

woman. "Who am I that I should grudge to work a trifle more for one of the dear Lord's little ones? Has He not Himself sent her? Oh yes: by putting the kind thought into your heart, Herr Professor. And besides, what will it be? To dress her in the morning, to undress her at night. And then, even were it more, what would I care when it will be so great a pleasure to Miss Miriam to have the child?"

"All the same, Anna," said Paul, "I intend now to learn to help you as much as possible, so you will have to teach me. I will not be a troublesome pupil."

"No, but, Anna," said her master, seriously, "you have only to speak, and we will get a little maid to help you."

"Indeed, Herr Professor, you will do no such thing, though I thank you for the thought. But while the Lord blesses me with health and strength, I greatly prefer to do the work myself. And Master Paul is a great help; not a bit of wood or a drop of water do I have to get in now for myself, as you know. Oh yes, we shall manage extremely well. And I am going to set up the nice little bed in Miss Miriam's room, where there is plenty of room; and mine being so close to it, I can go in and out, and attend to both of them at once, as it might be."

Some time later that evening, when the little stranger was fast asleep in bed, Miriam and Paul and Anna held an important consultation—Miriam's pencil perfectly flying with the rapidity of her thoughts and her eager desire to convey them to the others. At length Paul was despatched to bring the professor, who coming at once in obedience to his daughter's summons, sat down beside her and read from the paper she put into his hand, her eyes the while intently fixed on his face, trying to read his thoughts there before he should utter them.

"Papachen," ran the missive, "Paul and Anna and I have a secret which we want you to help us to keep."

"Indeed, Miriam. Well, I know what a secret is; though when I have one I do not generally share it with so many. It may be, though, that there is one I shall be obliged to share by-and-by with some of you," said Mark, smiling. But Miriam was too much absorbed in her own secret to heed her father's allusion to any of his; and he continued reading.

"You are not to know what it is exactly, only it is something to do with the Christmas-tree, and a surprise for Greta about little Ella. She is not to know she is here till she sees the tree, and we must

not have the tree till after Abendbrod. Now that is what we want you to help us in. The tree must be here, because this is the coziest room in which to pass all the evening. So, could a large fire be made in one of the unused rooms, and chairs and a table carried in just for supper?"

"Far too cold," said Mark, shaking his head decidedly; "there has been no fire there for years: it would be too much risk for all of you."

Miriam made a little moue, smiling and frowning at the same time. But her father added after a moment.—

"But I suppose I must not refuse to help you."

Miriam shook her head decidedly.

- "Well, then, I think the supper must be laid in my study."
  - "The studio?" said Paul.
  - "No; my private study."
- "Hurrah!" cried Paul, throwing aloft and catching again a paper he held.
- "But—one moment—excuse me, Herr Professor," said Anna. "The room, I am sure, must be too dirty; we ought not to take a lady visitor into it."
- "No," answered her master meekly, and with a heightened colour on his dark cheek; but whether

called there by the allusion to his untidy room or by some other cause remains unknown. "I have thought of that," he continued, with a sort of diffident air; "but I think if I first put away all my books and other things that might be in the way, Anna would perhaps come with a pail of water and a duster and do a little cleaning—that is, if she has time."

"Time!" cried Anna; "I would sit up all night rather than not find time for that. When may I begin, Herr Professor?"

"Early to-morrow morning," answered he, with a grave smile at the old woman's evident impatience to descend as an avenging angel of cleanliness upon the disorder of his sanctum. "First," he added, "I must do my part in putting away books and other things, that there may not be too much obstruction in the path of your broom."

And late that night, when all in the house save himself were sleeping, Mark Marksen stood in his comparatively-cleared laboratory, looking round him with a gaze in which there was at least some satisfaction. After some hours of hard work in sorting and arranging the multitude of books and papers which for so many years past he had been accumu-

lating, he had finally placed away the greater number in a deep cupboard, not to be disturbed again, according to his present intentions. Others, however, were placed there only temporarily, just to be out of the way for the cleaning of the room and the festivity which was to follow. All the crucibles were put away, some for good, others for a time; and a perfect hecatomb of papers was sacrificed upon the wide hearth. And when there seemed nothing left for him to do, Mark looked round with a sigh and with some regret in his eyes, although with a certain satisfaction. But he would have been more than mortal could he have put away without some pain even the outward signs of an occupation which for nearly half his lifetime had absorbed almost every thought and energy of heart and brain. Yet though he felt at the moment a sinking at the heart, a void, as though something had passed for ever out of his life, something which it seemed inevitable he should miss at times, yet Mark knew and felt with gratitude that the blank would be filled up-nay, that already it had begun to be filled up. In the early hours of the winter morning he passed out of the room, softly closing the door behind him, the door leading through a corridor to the large unused apartments of the castle.

"No more to be a secret chamber," he said to himself, half smiling as he turned away, leaving the key in the lock that Anna might let herself in.

Carrying a lamp in his hand, and with soft felt slippers on his feet, Mark then passed noiselessly along the corridors and into the great dismantled rooms, where he stood for a few moments with a pleased look upon his face.

"These for the future will for a time be the secret chambers," he said to himself with a smile, "if indeed that can be a secret which must perforce be shared with others; for Paul, at any rate, I must take into my confidence, and I suppose also Anna and Miriam, so soon as operations can begin in real earnest."

Before seeking rest, Mark paused for a few moments by the bed where Paul lay calmly sleeping. He stood there for some time, gazing down at the boy whose coming had been to Mark, as he himself recognized, a sort of turning-point in his life. And as he thus gazed his eyes grew dewy with unwonted moisture, and his lips moved, almost as if in silent prayer.

"In the time of my despair thou wast sent to me," he murmured—"at the time when, awaking from a delusive dream, I began to comprehend how futile for ever would be my efforts to solve the secret in whose pursuit I had wasted my life; and when, wrapped in morbid self-consciousness, I doubted even the forgiveness of God, because of that wasted life and my neglect of the precious gifts He had given me, it was then, Paul, that thou didst come to mea Heaven-sent gift, as I do believe. In caring for thee and tending thee, of necessity at first, because there was none other to do it, it was thus I began to realize the blessedness of caring for one's fellows; and still more since that, in the unconscious influence that thou and thy dear sister have exercised upon me, arousing me in spite of myself from a morbid brooding over an irretrievable past to humble though earnest striving towards a nobler life." As if in silent blessing, Mark held his hand over the head of the unconscious boy, not quite touching his dark "Boy, I love thee!" he whispered. locks. wast sent to me by a gracious and all-forgiving God in place of my own lost son; and here I vow that by divine grace I will ever, to the best of my ability, be a wise and loving father to thee and to my Miriam, whom God so mercifully spared to me when he took the rest."

Stooping, he kissed Paul's forehead very softly.

and tenderly as a woman. At the light touch the boy smiled in his sleep, and murmured, "Father!" then was quiet again. But Mark's heart thrilled with the idea that that perhaps was a Heaven-sent token of the acceptance of his promised fatherhood. And his heart was wonderfully lightened as he turned away and sought at length his needed rest.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

# A "CHRIST-CHILD."

" Now, Herr Mark, if you will carry Miriam back to the living-room, we shall very soon have all ready for the event of the evening."

"And what will your sister do meanwhile?" Mark asked of Paul, but looking at Greta.

"Oh, she will remain here. And you will come back to her immediately. It will not be for long, you know. We have but one little thing to arrange, and then I shall return and fetch you both."

Mark lifted his daughter in his strong arms, and, preceded by Paul, bore her to the living-room, which was all in the trimmest order, its floor and its furniture in the highest state of polish, its walls decked with gleaming garlands of evergreen, while a pleasant glow of light and warmth from the open stove and several lighted candles was diffused around. At one end of the room, not far removed from Miriam's

couch, was a great Christmas-tree, which had that morning been dressed by Mark and Paul, under the immediate direction of Miriam. On its branches, besides a number of many-coloured wax-candles, there hung toys and bon-bons and fruit, as well as many more useful things; while beneath and around the tree were arranged articles of clothing—knitted socks and mittens and comforters, and a few other things, chiefly produced by the industrious hands of Miriam and Anna.

Anna and the little Ella had had supper together, but all was now cleared away, and the room made tidy. Anna was dressed in her bright-hued Sunday garb, with a snowy handkerchief and cap; while Ella wore a white woollen frock of Miriam's, which the latter had hurriedly altered to fit the little girl. When Mark put his daughter upon the sofa, he had placed her in a sitting posture, with her back against the sofa back, her knees bent, and her feet inclined towards the floor, but resting upon a stool. For that position had been of late recommended by Dr. Henschel for Miriam to adopt now and then, in the hope—though only a slight one—that she might some time begin "to feel her feet."

"Now, is there anything you wish me to do before

I go?" asked the professor when Miriam was comfortably settled. "Shall I help to light the candles on the tree?"

"No, thank you; Anna and I can do it," said Paul.

"And in a very little while I shall come and fetch you."

So Herr Marksen, nothing loath perhaps, retired. And as soon as he was gone Paul fetched from the kitchen a great heap of evergreens, with which he deftly and speedily constructed a sort of bower, beneath the fir tree's spreading branches, and on that side which immediately faced the door by which Greta would presently enter the room. Little more remained to be done. There had been two or three rehearsals before that day, and Ella, who had been an intensely interested but remarkably calm witness of all the preparations, had also been thoroughly drilled by Paul in the part she was intended to take in the surprise. Just as the arrangements were completed, and Paul, after a last look round, was about to go and call his sister and Mark, Miriam made a suggestion on her tablets.

"Would it not be better to have a dim light—no light but from the candles on the tree, and from the open stove door?"

Yes—all thought that would be an improvement; and the other candles were extinguished by Paul and Paul then left the room; and a short time after the door opened, and Greta stood just within, silent with astonishment and pleasure. A soft radiance seemed to fill all the room, gleaming here and there upon the old dark wood furniture, upon the glistening leaves of holly and laurel, upon the walls, upon Paul's bright, happy face, as he stood near the open stove, and lighting up into strange beauty the small pale face and the bright eyes and burnished locks of Miriam, whose sofa was drawn up near to the great Christmas-tree, where the full light of its candles fell upon her. And in the sweet face of Greta the light shone also with a soft glow, as well as in her dark eyes, which were looking so earnestly into the bower Paul had made at the foot of the tree.

### What was it?

The light from above, shining down through the branches of the tree, showed to Greta, in a soft subdued effulgence, what seemed to her at first a presentment of the Divine Babe, encradled, as in a shrine for Noël. A small childish form clad in purest white; above the white brow a soft golden halo; a sweet and

steadfast look in the eyes, which gleamed dark and blue as sapphires, and which seemed to look directly and expectantly into hers, as if for greeting.

Mark Marksen, who was standing just behind Greta, bent his head and whispered to her,—

"Go closer, it is a surprise the children have prepared for you."

As she drew nearer, the little figure held out a tiny hand, and a little tired voice said,—

"Ask me who I am."

Greta obeyed. Her heart was filled with wonder and pleasure, for she saw now who it was, though she would not yet appear to do so.

"Who are you?" she asked; "are you the Christ-child?"

"Yes; but not the real one, you know, only better than a wax one. Don't you think so?"

Then Mark, who had drawn near, said gravely,-

"The Christ-child has sent to Mark Marksen and his daughter Miriam this little one to care for, in His name and for His sake."

Greta turned quickly to Mark, her lifted face lit up with grateful pleasure.

"O Herr Marksen, how can I thank you!" she cried.

"There is no need; it is enough that you are pleased," he answered softly.

"Pleased!" she echoed; "you could have given me no greater pleasure."

And then she was down on her knees, and Ella's thin little arms were round her neck as she cried with delight,—

"O Nurse Greta, Nurse Greta, how glad I am to have you hug me again!"

For answer Greta rose with the child in her arms, and stood so, clasping her close, her graceful figure thrown a little back, her head bent sideways towards the little pale face, and swaying slightly as a mother rocks her infant in her arms. Greta had a true mother's heart for anything that was helpless or suffering, or in what need soever of tenderness and pity.

Mark's face as he watched the two was a study, and perhaps the strongest feeling in his heart at the moment was that of joy and gratitude that it had been put into his heart to do that which could cause so deep and pure a pleasure to one who had herself been the unconscious instrument of so much good to him and his.

Almost involuntarily he stepped towards her and

put his hand softly on Greta's shoulder, looking down at her with unconscious tenderness; and his voice trembled a little, though all he said was,—

"Come, sit down with her; she is too heavy for you."

Greta obeyed him, sitting down in the low chair at the side of the stove towards which he drew her.

- "And now," said Paul, "we will begin to distribute the presents—shall we not, Herr Mark?"
- "Yes, yes," he answered; and he and Paul, assisted by Anna, began the pleasant business at once.
  - "But first, your own to Miriam," said Paul.
- "Ach yes!" And thus reminded, Mark hurried into the passage, and returned almost immediately, pushing before him a wheel-chair of light make and noiseless movement. He wheeled it right up to Miriam, who was looking on with beaming face.

"There, Liebchen," he said. "Now you will be able to get about a little more; for in this you will, I hope, since you are so much stronger, be able to push yourself at least about the room."

Miriam was delighted, for lately she had felt that her weight was now becoming almost too much for poor Anna to carry even from room to room, though the good old woman always tried to hide the effort it cost her. And Mark himself was not always there to do it. As he stooped to receive his daughter's silent but hearty thanks, he felt that he could scarcely have given her anything which would please her better, because it would make her feel a little less dependent on others.

Miriam's other presents were two interesting books from Greta and Paul, and a pretty cup and saucer for her own especial use from Anna. For Greta there was a most beautifully-carved book-stand, at which Herr Mark had worked with infinite skill and patience; a large shawl in fine white wool, of Miriam's own making; and from her brother a photograph of their father in a frame carved by himself. himself had a fine warm greatcoat from Mark; an illustrated complete edition of Shakespeare from his sister, who had long been saving up for it; and from Miriam and Anna a supply of knitted socks and And Mark's own presents were fur-lined gloves. gloves from his daughter, and a meerschaum pipe from Paul, while Greta begged his acceptance of a tobacco-pouch embroidered by herself. Neither was Anna forgotten: for her master gave her a sum of money-wealth itself in Anna's eyes-to do what she pleased with; while Paul and his sister gave her a large cambric kerchief and Sunday cap. Ella was made happy with toys and picture-books. Leo had a new collar, and Paul tied a broad yellow ribbon round the neck of the struggling black "Sultan," getting well scratched for his pains.

"And all the rest of the things," wrote Miriam, "are going to be taken by father and Paul to the hospital in time for your children's *fête*, Greta."

Soon after this Ella, who had grown very sleepy, was put to bed by Greta, Anna assisting, and Miriam going at the same time, as she was now very weary from the unwonted excitement. For the convenience of their visitor, Anna had made up a temporary bed for herself in Miriam's room, and arranged her own bed all fresh and nice for the Fräulein.

"You will come back," said Mark to Greta as she prepared to carry the child into the bedroom. "You do not also wish to retire, though you look weary?"

"Oh no," she said, laughing; "I am not so tired that I need go to rest yet."

"Then—I am going to my room to smoke, the room in which we had supper—will you come afterwards, with Paul, and sit with me awhile?"

"With pleasure, Herr Mark."

Later, when the three were together in the study,
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Greta comfortably ensconced by her host in an easy-chair, he himself in a lounging-chair opposite to her, while Paul lay idly on a couch, his head framed in his arms, dreaming boyish dreams perhaps, Mark said presently to Greta,—

"Do you know that on that day when I brought you through this room to the studio, you were the first woman—nay, the first person—who had ever crossed the threshold of my private sanctum?"

"Was it indeed so?"

"Yes. And not only this, but the other in the city where we lived before we came here, and of which this is the representative. For more than twenty years no foot but my own ever crossed the threshold of the room I called my secret chamber."

Greta was silent. She had learned from Mark at different times something—a good deal—of his past life, and she had been very sorry for the man, but still more sorry for those, especially the true and tender wife and mother, who had loved him dearly—as she knew they had—but who had been, as it were, kept always so far off from the man who was bound to them all by nature's closest ties. She thought what a saddened home that must have been notwithstanding the great love which had bound

mother and children together. She looked so grave and sorrowful that Marksen asked her,—

"Of what are you thinking, Fräulein?"

"They must have missed so much in their lives," she said simply, with a deep, involuntary sigh.

Mark looked at her keenly for a moment, then sat in silence with rather a sad look on his face; he understood her.

"Yes," he said at length, turning aside to knock out his pipe into the ash-tray on the table at his elbow; "I have seen since that they may have done But believe me, Fräulein, I never dreamed it then. Somehow I fancied always that I was a man whose disposition was quite unfitted for domestic joys; it never occurred to me to think that my presence among them, or anything I could personally do, could conduce to their happiness; I always felt rather that they might be happier without me. I should, I hope and believe, have acted very differently had I known that, as you put it, they missed anything out of their lives by my conduct. Well, I had a bitter awakening and a justly-merited punishment. still feel as if I never could forgive myself for the unhappiness I may have caused by my mad pursuit of an illusive good, to the neglect of those real blessings

which God had given me and for which I was so unthankful."

"Do not say you can never forgive yourself," said Greta softly, for Paul had fallen asleep. "When God has forgiven us we may forgive ourselves, though we must always regret when we remember."

"If I could only fully atone—I will as far as possible; but if it might only atone to them in some way."

"That too is possible—at least in so far that they may be fully aware of your sorrow for the past. But for real atonement—O Herr Mark, you know as well as I can tell you how fully the only real atonement has been made for the sins of us all."

"Yes," he said, after a short silence, "I do know it; but I need reminding now and again. I thank you, Fräulein Gretchen, for doing it. You have opened my eyes to many things," he added, rather brokenly. "I am a different man since I knew you; your goodness has been more to me than you dream, perhaps—yes, far more. You think, then, that I may hope to be fully forgiven?"

"I am sure you are fully forgiven," she answered earnestly, "and also that you ought to try to rest on God's own assurance of forgiveness for sin truly repented of."

"Well," said Mark, after another pause, "I will try to do so; and, at any rate, I will try to show my repentance by doing what little good I can in the world, for I suppose that is the best way of showing one's sincerity."

"You have begun already," answered Greta, with a smile that cheered Mark's heart. "How good you have been to Paul; and then in bringing home this poor little child!"

He shrugged his shoulders. "That is very little; I pleased myself also. But by-and-by, perhaps, I may be able to do more—if you will help me. And"—he bent forward a little in his chair and spoke almost in a whisper—"I will not take any credit to myself that I do not deserve. I will tell you the truth: it was greatly to please you that I brought the child home."

Greta's clear cheek flushed a little and her eyes fell. Mark threw himself back in his chair; and both were silent for a time. He feared that he might have offended her. Presently he knocked out his pipe, slowly refilled it, and lighted it in a leisurely manner; then glancing uneasily at her, he said,—

<sup>&</sup>quot;Have I offended you, Fräulein Gretchen?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;No," she answered, looking up with a smile that

reassured him. "How could I be offended at that? Only—"

"Only," he said, "you would prefer that I acted from a different motive. Yet it is a good motive, though not the highest. But be content, Fräulein; if you will continue your friendship to me, you cannot fail to lead me higher."

Greta was too much touched by these words to answer him directly. Perhaps she was glad that at that moment her brother awoke, and that Mark turned to speak to him.

- "Ah, Paul, you have slept well."
- "Yes, but not enough," answered the boy. "If you do not object, I will go to bed now, Herr Mark."
- "Yes, do so; and I would also advise your sister to go. She looks very weary, and as if needing a long rest; and, indeed, it is not now too early."
- "Yes, you do look tired, Greta," said Paul, putting his arm round his sister's neck. "The matron at the hospital is right when she says you will wear yourself out."
- "Ah, she works too hard; I feared that," said Mark, looking at Greta anxiously.
- "It is not so much that," said Paul, "as that she takes things so much to heart. It is like tugging

at Greta's heart-strings when she has to let any of her little nurslings go while she thinks they still need care. The matron says she should harden herself."

Mark looked at Greta in silence for a moment.

"She will never harden herself—at least to that," he said abruptly, rising as he spoke.

Greta rose too.

"It is only," she said, smiling, "that I would always like to see the children stronger before they leave us; it is hard to let them go while they still need so much care."

She held out her hand to Mark.

"Now I will lecture you," he said, with a grave smile. "Try to hope that what you wish may be brought about in some way. God can do all things, as you have often reminded me. Hope, then, and pray that the time may be not far distant when something more may be done for some, at least, of these poor little ones. And so, good-night! Sleep well!" He pressed her hand; and she left the room with her brother, who was going to light her to her room.

#### CHAPTER XV.

# MIRIAM'S NOTE-BOOK: A STARTLING INCIDENT.

I T is now just about two years since we came to live here in the forest. Cold, bright days of March are with us; the birds are already setting up housekeeping; and the other day, when Paul took me out along the forest glade in my wheel-chair, we noticed that some of the trees were beginning to bud.

It is a year and a quarter since we kept that Christmas-eve by making little Ella Schmidt a Christ-child to surprise Greta. Ella stayed with us for many months, and grew at last so well and so much stronger that she was able to go home again. Now she goes to school; and her mother says she is beginning to be quite a help to her with the boys. So everybody is very glad that father's good thought and care for her have been so well rewarded. Greta says she never could have thought the child would

recover so completely as she has done apparently. She is, however, very small and thin still for her age, but makes up for it in will and energy. And it is quite amusing, when she occasionally comes to see me, to hear her talk of "the boys" and their doings as if she were their grandmother at least; and I believe she even considers that Paul and I are quite children compared with herself.

Since Ella left we have had another little one here who had had fever, and wanted a few weeks' extra care and a run in the fresh air to make him quite strong again. He was a dear little fellow. Paul took almost all the care of him; he had him to sleep in his room, and was altogether like a father to him. But little Hans went home before Christmas, as he was by then very well again, and his mother wished to have him home.

Since then we have had no other child to stay with us; and I quite miss the little things, and think Anna does too, for the other day she said to father,—

"Do you know of no other little one, Herr Professor, who would be the better for coming to stay a little while with us?"

Father was sitting near me with a book and a pencil in his hand, making calculations of some kind,

as I thought. After a moment he looked up, and answered Anna with such a bright face,—

"You wish to have another? Yes, I know, my good Anna, you are never so happy as when 'mothering' any little one who needs such care. But we will not take another yet. Only very soon, in a day or two, perhaps, I may have something to tell you which will please you, I hope."

One evening soon after that, father came home from the city, where he had been all day, and went straight to the sitting-room where Paul and I were—I working, Paul reading to me from "The Merchant of Venice."

"I have a secret to tell you all," said father, sitting down beside me. "Where is Anna? she must come, too, and hear it."

Paul went to find her; and my father looked at me so brightly, saying,—

"No more delusive secrets, Miriam, which your foolish old father will hug up close in his own gloomy heart."

I frowned at him, shaking my head, and taking my tablets, wrote,—

"You are not gloomy, you are not old, but all that

is wise and good, and my own dear father,—and much younger than you used to be."

He laughed, and kissed me. And just then Paul came back, saying that Anna begged the Herr Professor would excuse her for a few moments, as she was making bread, and could not just then leave it, but would not be long.

"Well, I will tell you the first part before she comes, then," said father. "And, first of all, you may perhaps think that it can be no great secret, as I am about to share it with three people. It is a secret, however, in so far that I wish it kept entirely from your sister, Paul; nobody is to tell her anything about it, at all events till I give the word. And we will, of course, tell Anna the same."

Then father proceeded to tell us all about it. But I was not to say much in my book, because I was often in the habit of giving it to Greta, to read some of my thoughts and ideas; and I might forget and put it into her hands, and so she would come to learn the secret before the time.

It seemed that Paul already knew that father had lately been hoping to make a satisfactory business arrangement about the wonderful new medicine he had discovered; and it now appeared that he had concluded

an agreement with a gentleman introduced to him by Herr Carl Stümpfen—a very rich man—who had undertaken to advertise and make the medicine known, at his own risk, as an investment. He had given my father a handsome sum down, and besides that, he was to have a share in the profits; but the patent was to become the property of the gentleman, Dr. R——, though it was to be advertised in my father's name.

There, I hope I have made myself clear. I understood when father explained it to me, but to give an explanation of the arrangement myself is entirely another matter.

"You will be quite a rich man, father," I said to him (on my tablets), "with that and your carving, for which you get so many good orders. What wonderful things are you going to do with so much money, I wonder?"

"I think I know," said Paul. "Your father is going to 'lend it to the Lord.'—Have I not rightly guessed, Herr Mark?"

"Yes," said my father gravely; "that certainly is what I would wish to do, Paul. And now to tell you something of my plans. Here, too, comes Anna, who must also hear them."

Anna then was bound over to secrecy, as Paul and I had been. And then my father told us all what his great secret was. Afterwards, when Anna and I were alone again, my old nurse said to me,—

"Ah, Miss Miriam, my dear, this beautiful plan of your father's is worth working for indeed. And how good it is to see him now! so different altogether, not like he used to be when he would shut himself up always alone, even from your dear mother, groping and prying and trying to find out something which never has been found out yet, and never will be, I daresay; perhaps trying to discover something to make old people young again—I know not. Only one thing I know: he did not thus make himself younger. A poor, worn man he was, old before his time, when first we came to live here. Ah yes, as we have said before, it was a real blessing when Master Paul came to us, he and dear Miss Greta. And what a day of rejoicing that will be when all that your father has planned is ready! I fancy I can see Miss Greta's face when she knows about it."

Anna was putting me to bed, and when I was comfortably settled she brought me my two photographs, which I always keep beside me at night—my mother's and dear Greta's. I was taking a long look at dear

mother's, and Greta's was on my lap, and I think Anna must have guessed something of what was in my thoughts, for she said,—

"Miss Greta now reminds me greatly of your dear mother, Liebchen; both so good and gentle, so thoughtful for others, and eager to do good, only your dear mother never had it in her power to do much, save for her own children. Yes, my child, she would indeed, I am very sure, have greatly rejoiced at the changes that have come about among us, and at the work that we hope to do. And I am sure too, Liebchen, that she would love to think you have such a friend as Miss Greta."

I have not yet said what my father's secret is, and all I will say (lest Greta should see what I have written) is that great alterations are to be made in the house in many ways. Already the workmen are here busy from morning till night, and half distracting Anna with the dust they make, and me with the noise. But we mean to bear it patiently for the sake of what is to come. Father is anxious to get all finished by early June—a little more than two months. Sometimes I go out into the corridor and across to the other wing of the house, where the alterations are

going on, to see what progress is being made. They are getting on capitally; very soon these workmen will have finished their part, and then a much more interesting work will begin.

Greta has not been to see us quite so often lately. When she did come the other day, and heard the sound of hammers, she said, laughing,—

"Why, Herr Marksen, have you workmen in the house? For I suppose that is not Paul at his wood-carving, though I know he has rather a heavy hand at it."

"No," answered father, "it is not Paul. Yes, Fräulein, I have workmen in the house; for now that I can afford to do it, I think it would be a shame not to restore the old place, at least to some extent."

And then he turned the conversation back to Paul. It was quite true that Paul lacked the fine and delicate skill in carving which was needful to become a first-rate artist. My father always said he had plenty of vigour and boldness, but seemed unable to acquire delicacy of finish. Paul himself recognized this, and said he knew he could never make a first-rate artist, and would not be a second-rate one. He loved the

art, and it would be always a favourite recreation with him, but never his profession.

Indeed Paul's heart was in doctoring, and he had lately seriously made up his mind to be a medical man. For my father had thoroughly made him and Greta understand that it was his own earnest desire, and indeed his fixed intention, to take upon himself the charge of fitting Paul for any profession he might choose for his life's work. Afterward, according as success should attend him, Paul might, if he chose, refund some of the money expended upon his studies, but that would rest entirely with himself.

So now, in addition to other studies, my father was beginning to teach Paul practical and scientific chemistry; and all being well, in about a year's time he was to be entered as a student in a medical college.

The workmen have finished. Paul says it was enough to make one's hair stand on end to see Anna's face when she stood in the rooms and gazed around on the litter and mess they had made; and greatly against her will, poor Anna was forced to allow father to engage a woman from the city to come for two or three days and help to do the scrubbing and rough work.

Now things look very different; and in a week or two, how will they look then, I wonder?

Another fortnight has gone, midsummer is now at hand, and next week Greta is coming to spend with us her ten days' holiday.

Everything is now quite finished in those mysterious rooms, but they are locked up, not to be opened (except for Anna to go in and dust) until Wednesday, the day Greta is to come to us.

It is the most lovely weather. Every day now I sit out of doors in the forest, and when Paul has an hour to spare he comes and reads to me while I work. He has made a hammock for me, and slings it low between two trees, so low that sometimes as I recline in it my feet may touch the ground. It may be fancy, though I hope not, but sometimes I think, since I have grown to feel so much stronger, that my limbs are not so heavy and so utterly senseless as they were; and indeed, unless my constitution is by nature unusually obstinate and ungrateful, it would be strange if I did not at length respond a little to all the tender care and attention which have so long been bestowed upon me, especially by Greta whenever she comes to see us.

A strange and wonderful thing has happened. It might have been a terrible thing, but for God's great goodness. And I cannot think of it now without tears of pain and sorrow starting to my eyes; for although a great blessing has come to me, it came through a great danger to Paul which I hardly dare think of even now.

It was on the first day of Greta's visit. Father had taken her for a walk in the forest, to show her some pretty parts of it as yet unknown to her. Later they were to join Paul and me upon one of the lower heights by the shore of the lake—one of father's favourite walks, and to which there is a very gradually ascending slope, so gradual that Paul was able without much exertion to propel my chair up it by degrees, and resting occasionally on the way. We had taken the hammock with us, and Paul's "Shakespeare," from which he read to me till he was tired—I reclining comfortably in the hammock, knitting in hand, and Paul sitting against the trunk of a tree near me.

Presently, when we had been talking awhile, Paul, who was leaning on his elbow throwing pebbles into the shining lake, said,—

"The lilies are in bud, Miriam; see over there."

He pointed to a large group a little way before us, and not far from the shore. "Next time we come they will be in bloom, and I will get you some."

"Do you think," I wrote on my tablets, "that the buds would open if we took them home and put them directly in a large bowl of water? It would be so nice to watch them coming out."

"You would like it? We will try it then."

He jumped up and ran to the brink of the lake just opposite to where the lilies were growing; and throwing himself down full length, as he used to do last summer to gather lilies for me, he soon managed to secure three or four buds with some of the great glistening leaves, and threw them behind him on the bank.

"There's another splendid group," he cried to me; "we must have those!" And he stretched himself out still further, till I smiled to see what a length he is; for Paul is now sixteen years old, and very tall for his age.

But the next instant my smile of amusement was changed to a look of horror. I can hardly tell now how it was, but it all seemed to happen in a moment. Paul had overbalanced himself, and fallen right into the lake; and at that instant I caught

sight of father and Greta coming up the path towards me. As Paul disappeared, in that very moment I was standing on my feet, and some voice —my own, though I hardly knew it—was crying aloud with terror in it,—

"Father! father!" And I knew no more.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## MARK'S NEW SECRET.

VERY little conversation had passed between Marksen and Greta as they walked side by side on that fair June afternoon, with the shadows of the forest about them and the sunshine glancing through the branches of the trees—beech and oak but sparsely clad as yet in summer green, while the spruce firs had hung out their delicate tassels in vivid contrast to their more sober hue, and the pines, with their straight tall masts and sombre crowns, exhaled an aromatic odour all around in the warm moist air.

Mark's heart and mind perhaps were too fully charged with thought and feeling to let speech come readily. And Greta may have unconsciously been influenced by his mood, as well as by the sweet peacefulness of her surroundings. This much is certain, that neither of the pair felt less enjoyment in

their walk and their companionship for the silence which was only occasionally broken by one or the other. They were approaching the shore of the lake by a path in the opposite direction to that by which Miriam and Paul had reached it; a steeper path too,—so steep for the latter part of it that Mark had drawn Greta's hand through his arm, bidding her lean upon it, as he could see that she was already fatigued by their rather long ramble in the forest.

"We shall be with them directly," Mark said presently, as they began to emerge from the shadows into a clearer space. "See, there is the lake; and there is Miriam in her hammock."

"And I can hear Paul's voice, but not what he says," said Greta.

But almost in the same moment she clutched her companion's arm convulsively, and Mark himself started with amazement, and with the sense of an unknown horror. For there at the hammock side stood Miriam upon her feet, her face blanched, and her eyes wide with terror, while a shrill and painful voice cried,—

"Father! father!"

They comprehended instantly, for Miriam was pointing to the lake. With lightning swiftness Mark

darted to the spot in time to see Paul struggling to the surface, but entangled among the long-stemmed and deep-rooted water-plants. To throw off his coat and hurl himself in was but the work of an instant; and in less time than it takes to tell. Paul was recovered from his perilous position, and he and his rescuer were in safety on the shore, little the worse except for their soaked garments, but full of fear for Miriam, by whose unconscious form they saw Greta kneeling, or rather half sitting, upon the grass, with Miriam's head in her lap. A double fear had been hers, but she breathed again with a murmured thanksgiving to God as she saw her brother safesaved for the second time by the same man, the man who, now kneeling near her, was looking with so much tender anxiety down at his unconscious child, and once, with scarcely less, up into her own face, his gaze unconsciously revealing to Greta something of the secret he had not thought to tell her then.

Paul, standing near in his dripping garments, was the first to speak.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Was I mistaken? Did I hear her call?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Yes, Paul; she did call her father to save you."

"Will it last, do you think?" Mark asked tremulously of Greta.

"We may hope so. Hush! see, she is coming to."

The white eyelids quivered, then opened fully, and Miriam gazed around her, vaguely at first, then questioningly. Her father's form and Greta's bending closely over her hid Paul from her sight. She touched Mark's wet sleeve, then a look of recollection came into her face.

"Paul," she said, in a low but distinct voice.

Paul heard it, and coming forward knelt close to her in the place her father vacated.

"Safe," she said, with a radiant smile.

Paul nodded—he could not speak. But he took the little hand Miriam put up to stroke his face and kissed it softly. His heart was full of joy and thankfulness. For his prediction had come true: Miriam's voice had been restored to her. And Paul felt that he would gladly have gone through thrice the danger to bring about so glad a result.

That evening Mark Marksen stood in the doorway of his studio nervously waiting for Greta, whom he could see coming towards him down the long corridor from the direction of his daughter's room. Earlier in the day, he—Mark—with Miriam and Paul had taken

a last look to see that all was in good order in the rooms so long disused, now restored and fit for occupation. And now at length the moment had come when Mark had promised himself to reveal his secret to Greta.

What would she think of it? What would she say? What would she feel?

As she came up to him he threw away the cigar he held and took her hand. His heart was beating so with a tumult of varied feelings that he could not have spoken intelligibly had he tried. He led her in silence to the closed apartments, unlocked the door, and leading her in, still holding her hand, closed it behind them, then let go her hand, and standing a little aside watched her as she gazed around.

They stood in the largest of the rooms. The setting sun cast its golden light through three long windows; but shining through venetian blinds, threw a light at once subdued and cheerful around. In each window was a stand with growing plants and flowers. On the walls hung pictures, cheerful and simple subjects, artistic in their way. There were a few comfortable chairs, two tables, and other necessary furniture, with shelves for books and other things. But chief of all, against the walls on two

sides of the great room were rows of cot-beds, a dozen in all—eight on one side, four on the other.

With slightly-parted lips and wondering eyes Greta gazed around the room. Then as she realized what it meant, a lively look of gladness dawned upon her face, and smiles and tears struggled for supremacy. She stretched her hands to Mark.

"O Herr Mark, Herr Mark!" was all she could say.

In an instant he was by her side, but he did not take her hands.

"You are pleased? all is right?" he said, striving hard to speak with coolness and to be only businesslike. "All has been done under the directions of Miriam and Paul, who, as you are aware, both know something of such matters. There are other rooms: a large one for daily use, and where meals can be taken; a playroom for the little ones in wet weather; a bedroom adjoining this for their nurse; and also two better rooms, quite near, for-for the lady who will, I hope, consent to preside over this—this convalescent home for children. It is only on a small We cannot take more than a dozen at a time, to do justice to them; but still I trust we may be able to do some good."

"Some good! O Herr Mark, you do not know what a blessed work it will be. But God will reward you."

He took her hand now.

"If I needed or deserved reward, I have it already, at least in part," he said, softly and with a look she could not fail to understand; "but I don't deserve it. This is not all unselfishness. God knows, I am glad to be able to do something to make amends for my former wasted life; though I know full well, however much I may do, I must still remain in His debt. But, Gretchen—excuse me that I call you so this once—I will be perfectly frank: self is with me still, even in this. I am pleased to be able to do it, chiefly because it pleases you."

She did not answer, and he dropped her hand and turned aside to one of the windows with a sigh.

"I hope," he began again, with averted face—"I hope you will yourself select the first batch of children. We are quite ready for them. They can come at any time—to-morrow, if you like."

"We must find a nurse for them first," said Greta, trying to emulate his apparent coolness and business-like tone. "And also, Anna will need help in more ways than one. Excuse me, Herr Mark, but we must

be practical, and I know you will not mind my thus reminding you of these necessities."

"No, no. About help in the house, that is arranged for. And the nurse—well, I thought you might know one who would suit your purpose."

"And—and the lady who is to preside over it all?"

Mark was leaning against the window, looking
out without seeing. He did not answer Greta's
question.

"Have you any one in view?" she asked softly.

He frowned, making an impatient movement.

"No; I know not. It will not be very difficult, perhaps, to find some one—I don't know."

Then he suddenly turned his head towards her, looking down at her feet rather than at her face, and speaking with low, rapid utterance.

"Well, I will tell you the truth. At first, when first this idea about the Home occurred to me, I meant but one thing—to ask you to be the superintendent. I thought it would be easier and better for you than hospital work. And you love Miriam, and I thought you would both like it for that reason also. But now—"

He hesitated, and after a moment Greta said, "And now, Herr Mark?"

He lifted his eyes to her face then; but hers were lowered, and he did not see the light in them.

"But now," he said with abruptness, "I cannot ask you that. I dare not. I could not bear it to have you here only in that capacity, because—well, because I love you. There—the truth is out!" he added, almost roughly, and turned away and hid his head upon his arms on the window-sash.

Greta raised her head, and stood looking at him a moment with soft, dewy eyes, while a tender smile played round her mouth. Then she went to him and put a hand upon his shoulder.

"Mark!" she said softly.

Raising himself with a start, he looked at her, and saw it all in her sweet face. His own filled with wondering rapture.

"What," he murmured, "is it so indeed?"

Her eyes answered him, and he drew her close within his arms. Presently he whispered, "It is too much happiness; what have I done to deserve it?"

Greta raised her head from his shoulder with a smile.

"I don't know indeed, Mark; but I know that that reason of yours for not asking me was a very poor one." "And you are not afraid to trust yourself to me," he asked gravely, "knowing what you do of my past?"

"The past is over," she answered; "we have only the present and the future to consider. We will try always to influence each other for good, dear Mark. I shall need your help just as much as you need mine."

Silently, as if in blessing, he laid a trembling hand upon her dark hair, then bent his head and kissed her upturned face.

The news of their betrothal gave almost as much pleasure to Miriam and to Paul as it did to Mark and Greta themselves, while Anna gave it as her opinion that the arrangement was a most sensible one and wholly satisfactory in every way.

Rather to Greta's consternation at first, Mark, abetted by Miriam, insisted on a speedy marriage, taking his stand upon the ground that the Home could not efficiently be set going until the lady superintendent was prepared to take her place.

"And you know, my Gretchen," Mark pleaded, "the hot summer is already with us, and you would be the last to wish the little ones to suffer in their

close city homes when they might be here in the pure air."

This seemed almost unanswerable. They were therefore married in three weeks, and went away for a brief holiday of one week.

On their return, Miriam, supported on either side by Anna and Paul, stood at the door to give them greeting.

"Dear father! dear Greta!" she murmured.

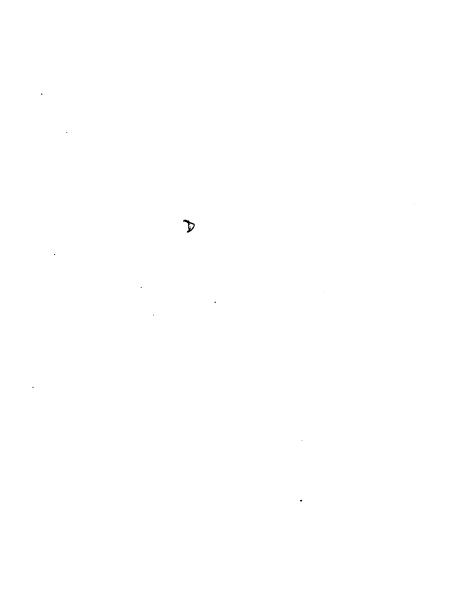
For she has her voice still; and though as yet it is only weak, Dr. Henschel, who has been to see her, recommends that she should use it, in moderation at first. He advises also the same measure with regard to her limbs, and is himself most delighted to be able to assure his young patient and all to whom she is dear that he anticipates the happiest results by-and-by.

The Forest Home for Convalescent Children was duly opened, quite quietly and without ostentation, and continues to flourish. The only drawback to Greta's and Miriam's happiness in it is that sometimes little ones have to be refused admission for want of room. But this, Mark assures them, shall be rectified before long, since prosperity smiles still upon him. Miriam does not know whether to be glad or sorry that Paul has decided, as soon as he is qualified, to

go as a medical missionary, or, as he himself says, as a Christian medicine-man, to India.

Mark says—but he tells it only to Greta as a secret—that if, as they hope and trust, Miriam's health is later quite restored, he himself feels sure that when Paul goes abroad he will take Miriam with him.

THE END.





The Sea Table	DATE	DUE	

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